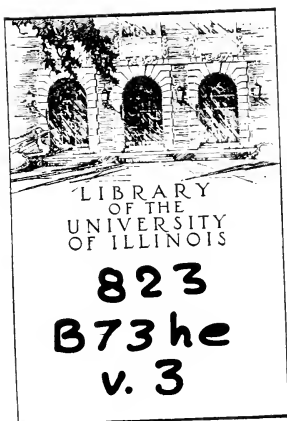






Walter Selby.





HENRY DE POMEROY;

OR,

THE EVE OF ST. JOHN.

VOL. III.

LONDON :
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HENRY DE POMEROY;

OR,

THE EVE OF ST. JOHN.

A LEGEND OF CORNWALL AND DEVON.

BY MRS. BRAY.

AUTHOR OF

“TRELAWNY,” “TRIALS OF THE HEART,”
“THE WHITE HOODS,” “DE FOIX,” “BORDERS OF
THE TAMAR AND TAVY,” ETC.

Can such things be
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder?

SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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HENRY DE POMEROY.

CHAPTER I.

Death could not a more sad retinue find,
Sickness and pain before, and darkness all behind.

NORRIS.

WHEN Cædmon rushed from the presence of Abbot Baldwin, he felt as if all the world had risen against him, because the world within himself had rebelled, and his sense of indignation had passed the bounds of reason. He had loved Baldwin, and Baldwin had disappointed his feelings. The first disappointments of youth, be they in friendship or in love, are ever the bitterest; as at that period of life the mind has not acquired experience sufficient

to make it, in some measure, expect disappointment, whilst it teaches it to bear with submission those evils that are inevitable, and to look with a patient hope on all such as are capable of alleviation, from time, circumstance, or change.

Though Baldwin was his superior in age, learning, and station, yet Cædmon had lived with him so much on terms of equality, so favoured, so familiarly happy, that he felt a rupture with the abbot was nothing less than the breaking of an ancient friendship; a thing always painful, and doubly so now, as, to the usual sufferings of such a breach were super-added, on his part, the fear of punishment, and all the danger of a resentment that would feel itself bound in dignity, as well as in policy, not to forgive. Cædmon, also, was very wrath; his character, one of uncommon energy, caused his emotions, of hatred or of love, to be alike sensitive and strong. Even in calmer hours, when his feelings seemed to slumber, as if he

were indifferent to things around him, there ever lurked below this unruffled surface an under current that ran deep and strong, though it seldom appeared in all its force, till acted upon from without by the winds and tempests of his adverse fortunes.

Yet, notwithstanding this strength of angry passion, the natural generosity of Cædmon's disposition caused him very readily to forgive. He was easily reconciled even to those who had most deeply injured him, on the slightest appearance of remorse, or on the first movement towards concession. He asked no more; for what generous mind but would spare to another all the pain that can be spared in the avowal of having done wrong, when the wish to make it but appears? Angry as he was, yet could Cædmon have hoped for a reconciliation, even now would he have turned back, and sought it, after the first burst of feeling, not at the abbot's feet, but on his neck, with tears of affection; for he still entertained for

him affection; he still felt that dissatisfaction within himself which is so apt to arise in an ingenuous mind from being at war with one beloved.

But, alas! Cædmon knew Baldwin too well to hope for a reconciliation after what had passed. He knew, though the abbot had so highly favoured and esteemed him, yet he was not a man who could love; for he had far more imagination than sensibility in his character; and all the superior's preferences and friendships had ever more to do with his temper or his interest than with his heart. Thoughts such as these crowded on the young Saxon's mind, and so possessed him, that he seemed scarcely conscious of the path over which he trod in his way to old Wulfred's poor and lowly dwelling.

He had to cross in that way a small but thick wood; he now drew near its confines. It was evening; the sun was sinking amidst clouds of a threatening aspect, dull, heavy, and

dark, as if laden with a gathering storm. The “melancholy boughs” which overhung his path, waved gently in the rising breeze, and gave forth sounds that to his disquieted mind seemed like the low and monotonous murmurs of a suppressed grief. Cædmon passed under their profound shade with feelings in harmony with the hour and the scene. He was exactly in that state of mind which is raised by its own expectations to receive every accidental circumstance with a painful impression, a foreboding of evil. Even so was it now.

At the outskirts of the little wood, and not far from the path that led directly to the cottage, ran a small stream, over whose banks hung the pendent arms of a few willows; whilst alone and apart from these, the younger possessors of the soil, and as if shunned by them in its age and its misery, arose the decaying trunk, with a few remaining branches, of a withered and a blasted oak; an oak which, in the last stage of its decay had been struck with

lightning: the honours of its "antiquity" not spared, even as in human life we sometimes see the grey and venerable head laid low by some sudden stroke of adversity, after it had long and bravely withstood the manifold assaults of an envious world. On one of the few and withered boughs of the old oak, there now sat a raven, that croaked its dismal note as Cædmon passed the spot: a more fearful omen to a true born Saxon, filled with all the superstitious terrors of his age, could not be found. Cædmon looked up and shuddered: "It is the death-bird's cry," he muttered to himself, and with an impatience so common to passionate tempers, when worked to their utmost pitch, he resented even on the poor bird, the unintentional aggravator of his misery, the bitterness of his own feelings, as he stooped, and gathering up some loose stones that lay in the path, threw them at the raven. But the melancholy harbinger of evil was untouched, and undismayed by the vain assault that had been made

upon her, kept her seat on the withered bough, and only answered the attempt by a reiterated croak of dread.

Cædmon cursed the omen and passed on. In a less excited state, he would have made the sign of the cross for protection; but his anger was now too fierce to allow him to mock Heaven with any approach to such religious practices, as he deemed sacred. He felt this; and the conviction of how much internal peace is essential to that religious profession, Abbot Baldwin had so often recommended to his choice, flashed upon him, and he thought how incapable was a character passionate as his own, of becoming worthy the divine honours of the priesthood.

As Cædmon drew near the village church, of which we spoke in an earlier part of this narrative, he involuntarily turned his eye to the cross; at whose base, when he had last visited the spot, he had seen old Wulfred, surrounded by the favourite playmates of extreme

age; a company of little children. He had, also, often there seen him watching, with a "lack lustre eye," the last beams of the setting sun; which the old crusader seldom did without observing,—how soon that sun must set its last for him.

The cross remained just as it had stood ever since it had been raised by the piety of one of Cædmon's great Saxon ancestors, in the early stages of Christianity, who had also built the church that was at hand, on the site of an ancient baptistery. That cross now stood, in the silence of evening, illumined by the bright yellow beams of the departing sun; but Wulfred was not there. Four or five children, who looked hard at Cædmon as he passed along, were standing or sitting round its base, but not engaged in their usual play; they seemed to want (though some of them were scarcely old enough to understand their wants) the friendly and accustomed leader of their sports, the old crusader, who, in his decay, had

with them amused his idle hours, indulged the kindness of his heart, and kept up the last show of authority, to which extreme age so tenaciously clings, in the right to exercise it over children. And when the faculties are on the wane, alas ! how often is it but one child exercising power over another ! Such is frequently the misery and humiliation of that coveted thing, a long protracted age.

Cædmon did not speak to these little ones, as he passed, for he was in no mood for gentle words and thoughts, and with such he had always hitherto approached infancy. He soon cleared the remainder of his way, and stood before the door of Wulfred's dwelling. The door was on the latch ; it had no fastenings within, for Wulfred, notwithstanding the surrounding country was infested with thieves and marauders, had little fear, and possessed so little of this world's goods, and was so careless about them ; he had long enjoyed his days and nights in security and peace, which some of

his neighbours, better off than himself, could never do ; more especially when the Norman barons, and their reckless bands, rode abroad.

All without the cottage was still, and Cædmon fancied more than usually neglected ; for a wooden seat, on which the old man often reposed at his door, was overturned ; and two or three domestic fowls, that Wulfred was accustomed to keep within certain bounds, were now ranging unconfined, and had scratched holes and pits among the few flowers, and in the only bed of pot-herbs the little garden could boast.

These indications of something different from the usual course of things did not escape Cædmon ; and it was not without a secret misgiving he raised the latch, and, as if fearful of disturbing those who might be within, entered softly the low-roofed cabin of one so poor, so worn, and so depressed. The very first glance told Cædmon all the truth,—Wulfred was on the bed of death.

There, on a heap of straw and dried fern, wrapped in his woollen cloak, his lower limbs covered with a blanket, lay the faithful follower of the once gallant Oswy, the father of Cædmon's father, the fallen thane. Wulfred's head was supported by a heap of straw, on which was a pillow, his only luxury, and one that had been a gift of charity to his sick bed. Scarcely anything worthy the name of furniture was in the room: a stool or two, a rough-hewn table, a few domestic utensils of the rudest kind, and a crucifix, constituted all his wealth; excepting that on the walls hung the arms and armour of this faithful soldier of the cross. These warlike habiliments still looked tolerably well, for they had been carefully kept; and to scour and furbish arms, which he had no strength to wield, had been one of the chief employments of Wulfred in his old age, when he was not engaged in telling his beads, feeding his poultry, or playing with the children.

Two living creatures, the one human, the

other not, were all the beings having in them the breath of life, that now attended the last hours of poor Wulfred. But those were each of a kind the last to desert man in the moments of his extremity, or his distress ; for a woman and a dog watched by his bed of death. And let us not be deemed irreverent to the human creature, that we thus name her in conjunction with the brutal, when speaking of the virtue (there are few greater) of fidelity ; and in this the canine species may often teach a lesson to the human. And woman never shines brighter, is never more beautiful in goodness, than when engaged in those duties which call forth the exercise of her devoted constancy of heart.

Look at the career of man as he passes through the world,—of man visited by misfortune ! How often is he left by his fellow-man to sink under the weight of his afflictions, unheeded and alone ! One friend, of his own sex, forgets him ; another neglects him ; a third,

may be, betrays him ; but woman, faithful woman, follows him in his misery with unshaken affection ; bears the changes of his feelings, of his temper (embittered by the disappointments of the world) with the highest of all the passive virtues, a resigned patience ; ministers to his wants, even when her own are hard and pressing ; weeps with him “ tear for tear,” in his distress, and is the first to catch and to reflect a ray of joy, should but one light up his languid countenance in the midst of his sufferings, and never leaves him to his misery whilst there remains one act of love, duty, or compassion to be performed ; and at the last, when life and sorrow cease together, follows him to the tomb, with that ardour of affection which death can alone destroy.

The woman who now attended on the sick bed of Wulfred was one of his own kindred, a Saxon born, and though many years younger than himself, still far advanced in life. At the moment Cædmon entered, she was administer-

ing to him a cordial drink, that had been prescribed for him by the officer at the neighbouring castle, whose duty it was to give a charitable eye to the old and the sick of the Lady Alicia de Beaumont's far extending domain. If Wulfred had fewer conveniences and comforts about him than many others, it was his own fault, and arose, in a great measure, from his prejudices, and his often refusing the proffered kindness of the Norman lady, because he considered that she stood in the place which the Saxon born, Cædmon, ought to occupy in the castle of his forefathers.

As Cædmon approached, the old man raised his head, but his eyes were dim with age, and he did not immediately recognise his beloved young master. The latter was struck mute with sorrow and surprise at the sight which had so unexpectedly presented itself before him; for he had never heard of Wulfred's illness, and did not therefore anticipate finding

his dear, his only remaining follower stretched on the bed of death.

At such a sight Cædmon felt all the worth of that which he was about to lose and for ever—a true friend. He felt how necessary to all men, but above all to the orphan and the unprotected, are the counsels of friendship. He recollected how often, before now, he had known sorrows and vexations which none but a sympathizing heart, like Wulfred's, could have shared. And what should he do when Wulfred was gone? he, the outcast Saxon boy, could have little to hope from the ordinary benevolence even of the good, in the general mass of his fellow countrymen, who were sufferers like himself.

The scene on which Cædmon now entered to bear a part was indeed impressive: there lay, stretched on his couch of straw, the worn-out crusader; his countenance venerable, pallid, but still expressive even in death,—his eye dim, but raised, as if it sought from above

that light which, on earth, was for him and for ever nearly shut out. The damps of pain and weakness were on his furrowed brow; but though in the last stage of life, he breathed tolerably free, and spoke stronger than he had done for some days past; at least so thought the Saxon Bertha. She said also, that his mind sometimes wandered, yet only in reference to the past, which he would often fancy to be the present with him. But when recalled to himself, and his attention became fixed on any point, he was at once clear, distinct, and self-possessed. It seemed to Cædmon as if, in shaking off mortality, Wulfred parted only with the memory of the latter years of his being and the pains and infirmities that had been their portion; but that all his early recollections and feelings clung to his spirit, and partook of its immortality, and became as it were to him a part of that futurity to which he now looked forward with a mingled sense of awe and fear.

Bertha, who had so kindly ministered to his wants, now, as she leaned over him, took from his pallid lips the scarcely tasted cordial. Her eyes met those of Cædmon as he drew nigh—they were red with weeping; she gave the Saxon a speaking glance as she shook her head mournfully, and seemed to say to him—
“ You see how he is; you come too late.”

The dog, the cherished companion of Wulfred's walks and solitary hours, old, like his master, and like him nearly worn out, sat at the feet of the couch; not crouching down, but upright, and watched wistfully his master's face, as if expecting him to rise. It seemed as if the instinct of the faithful animal had told him something was amiss; for as Cædmon entered, he did not come up to him, or court his notice, as he was wont to do in happier hours; but sat still, only turning his head towards the visiter, without moving from his place, and again resumed his watch. Cædmon asked, as soon as his surprise would let him

“speak, how long had he been thus? had he been cared for? and was there hope?”

“Alas! no,” replied Bertha; “for the death-bird has croaked under his window, and the cricket has been heard; and yesterday a white horse came without a rider to his door. There is no hope for him on earth; but the Virgin and all the saints watch for our good Wulfred in Heaven.”

So spake his kinswoman, quite unheeding of the effects her words might produce on the sick man, whose sense of hearing was much quicker than that of seeing at this moment; but old Bertha was a true Saxon in all that related to matters of superstition, and therefore believed that signs and wonders, and death omens, and all other mysterious indications of the soul being about to leave its earthly tenement, were things as sacred and as true as the creed in which she placed her faith as a Christian.

“Alas!” said Cædmon, “and was it but to

witness this, I have now sought him in the hour of my affliction ! when I would fly from myself, from my own misery, it is but to meet a comforter in death !”

“That is the voice of Cædmon,” said Wulfred, who caught the last words, as the Saxon drew near the bed. “He so young, and talk of death ! It is only the old like me, who ought to talk of that ; old, sick, and dying. Cædmon ! where is he ? Give me your hand.”

“I am here, my dear Wulfred. I came to seek you, to counsel with you ; but little did I think to find you thus. I am here ; do you see me ?—here is my hand.”

“Yes, yes, I can see you now,” (Cædmon had thrown himself down beside the bed of straw,) “but my eyes are dim ; and to me you look not as you used to do—all looks darker. But the darkness I know is in myself,—in my poor old eyes ; but it suits best with the place where I am going—to the grave.”

“And must I lose you, Wulfred !” exclaimed

Cædmon, in a tone of passionate sorrow;—
“must I lose you, my only friend! Would that I could give you my youth, and take your age, and lie me down in death instead of you; for of life, I am, indeed, already weary.”

“Alack! what is that?” said Wulfred; “already weary of life! Oh! say not so, dear Cædmon; those are sad words to come from so young a heart. None but the old should know sorrow, for none but such as are old know the world. What has chanced?”

“I must not tell you, Wulfred; you are in no condition to be disturbed by my injuries or my griefs. Had you been well, I would have counselled with you—but not now: think not of me, but of yourself. Is there aught I can do for you?”

“Pray for me, Cædmon, pray for me! for I am going where no man may serve me, unless it be with such gifts as God will alone accept in payment for his blessings, the gifts of prayer and praise.”

“I do, Wulfred, I do pray for you. May the Virgin and all saints have mercy on you, and receive your soul, whenever it is called hence to its eternal rest. But I trust you may yet be spared. Your speech is too firm, your mind too collected, for dying.”

“You are mistaken,” replied Wulfred; “I know I shall not pass over this night,—the sun that sets to-day, will set the last for me,—I know it, Cædmon.”

“How know it?” inquired Cædmon.

“No matter,” said Wulfred.

“He has had a death vision,” whispered Bertha in a low voice, as she looked mysteriously around her; “but I must not say what it was; he charged me not to tell it. May be he will tell it you himself anon.”

Cædmon would have replied, but Wulfred, who dearly loved the young thane, now addressed him with much warmth, and said, — “You talked, Cædmon, of injuries and griefs; who has injured you? or did you speak but

of those injuries which have come to you from the wrongs of your fathers, as a part of your birthright ? for so the Normans have dealt with you and yours.”

“ Could you aid me, Wulfred, I would even now complain ; but alas ! you cannot,” answered Cædmon ; “ and so let my injuries rest where Heaven can alone find them, and visit them for comfort, within my own heart. A Norman has, in truth, been ever fatal to our house.”

“ A Norman ! ” exclaimed Wulfred, “ a Norman ! ” for the very sound of that word, coupled with a complaint of injustice, called up in the mind of Wulfred a fearful train of recollection ; “ Ay, a Norman has in truth injured thee, rendered thee fatherless, homeless, beggared, little better than a slave.” As he spoke the old man seemed greatly disturbed.

“ Peace, Wulfred, peace,” said Bertha ; “ think not of these matters ; they will but shake out of thee the little life that remains :

rather take comfort to thy heart and think upon the cross."

She held up that which depended from the the rosary at her side, as she spoke ; but an allusion of this kind was not at all calculated to soothe the awaking recollections of Wulfred.

"Think upon the cross !" he exclaimed ; "ay, I do think upon it — I see it — look, Cædmon, look ! there he stands."

"Who, my dear Wulfred, to what do you allude ?"

"Rest thee, rest thee," again said Bertha. "He cannot bear these starts now," she added, looking at Cædmon.

"I can bear my sword yet, and can carry my master's shield, as I did in the day of battle," said Wulfred. "Oh ! that was a glorious day for strife : how strange it should now come back again.—Oswy—the noble Oswy Do you not see him ? there — there : see how he grasps the cross ! See how his armour shines—his sword glances in the sun. His looks,

how calm they are, yet they are daring; they are not those of a man, for though terrible, they are bright, and his eye has in it the glance of an eagle. A glory is round his head, as his white plume waves above his crest."

"His mind wanders to the days of war and youth," said Cædmon; "has he been thus before?"

"Yes, three or four times since his illness, when he has not slept much," said Bertha; "the fit comes and goes, it seldom lasts long; and the hermit of Wilsworthy, who came yesterday to see him, said it was a temptation of the evil spirit, who fears he may die in prayer and in peace."

"I fear not to die," said Wulfred; "I have seen Oswy down, and have stood over his dead body, till my own blood mingled with that which flowed from his wounds. I fear not death, but I know what I fear."

"You can have no reasonable grounds for fear, Wulfred," said Cædmon; "you have

lived faithful, and have done your duty, as a soldier and a man ; what should you have to fear ? the mother of Heaven will protect you."

"Will she?" said Wulfred ; "will she?" and his thoughts took a new turn in their wanderings, from hearing the word mother. "Blessed be the tongue that tells me so ; I know what a mother is, and what a mother's love can do for a dear son : I had a mother once."

"Yes," said Bertha very simply, "the old have had mothers, as well as the young, though they have so long outlived them, that they seem to the world as if they had never belonged to anybody older than themselves. Wulfred, for all his grey hairs, often talks about his mother ; and," she added, as if she could no longer keep within her own bosom a secret which oppressed it, "I will tell you all. I am sure, Wulfred, as he lies there on his sick bed, would not wish to conceal it from you, had he but strength to tell it."

“To what do you allude?” inquired Cædmon, in a tone of surprise.

“Listen,” replied Bertha : “you see how attentive Wulfred has become but on hearing me name this strange matter. Shall I tell Cædmon all?” she added, appealing to the old crusader.

“Ay, all, if thou wilt,” he answered ; “go on.”

“Wulfred has often told me,” she continued, “that when he accompanied the Norman baron, the Lord de Beaumont, to the Holy Land, he followed his master, as well as he could, in all his ways ; because he thought it a matter of duty so to do. But Wulfred proved a better soldier than a bead-teller ; and he was young then, and cared more for the spirits of our ancient Saxon fountains, than he did for the image of the holy Virgin of Palestine ; and so he neglected the opportunity to go with the Lord de Beaumont when he went to do homage at her altar.”

“It was in the city of Jerusalem,” said Wulfred, “after it had been captured by the Christians.”

“Well,” continued Bertha, “he neglected to perform his duty at the shrine ; and by his own account, thought more of his own mother who lay dead in her grave, than he did of God’s mother who was living in Heaven. But the blessed Virgin herself taking pity on him, she appeared to him in a dream, and upbraided him with the neglect of worshiping her image at her altar ; and more especially upbraided him for loving his own mother’s memory better than hers. Yet, as our Lady is ever pitiful, she assured him that it was his mother’s wish, he should love the Queen of Heaven more than herself, and pay homage at her altar ; and furthermore, she told him that he should live to receive an assurance of this from his mother’s spirit ; but that such had been his want of faith, she could not promise this would take place till his last hour

drew nigh ; and then she should appear to him.”

“ And last night she did appear,” said Wulfred, who had eagerly listened to catch each word of the discourse as Bertha related those wonders the old crusader had so often told her were among the strange chances of his early life. “ Last night my mother did appear to me ; she stood there, a blessed spirit, and smiled upon me. I shall meet her yet again, where she waits for me now—in Heaven : at least I hope so ; I hope to meet her there, by the merits of the saints, and holy men’s prayers—”

“ The monks of St. John, and the nuns of St. Bennett, have told their beads for you, by night and by day, for the last week, Wulfred ; they have done it out of pure charity,” said Bertha.

“ May their prayers be heard,” replied Wulfred ; “ for though dying as a grief to the

flesh is nothing, yet it is a sore thing for the spirit. Of the dust we came, and to that we must return ; it is natural. But the spirit to wing itself away somewhere, and not know where, it is that makes a man shudder."

"I have heard holy men declare," said Cædmon, that the finest spirits are ever touched with the liveliest fears at the approach of death ; since they know not the issue—the dreadful uncertainty of what is to come. The consciousness of their own demerits, and the infinite perfections of God, — of God too pure even to behold iniquity ; these things make them suffer,—these are the fears that point the arrows of death, and make them barbed. Fears such as these, a good man like yourself, Wulfred, must experience. But you are a religious man, also : remember, therefore, the rock of mercy, and lay hold of it, in this your hour of need. Oh ! that you could teach patience to my mind, as I do now to yours, with

as great certainty of speaking that which ought to comfort."

"Let me,—let me comfort you," said Wulfred eagerly; "let me do something for you, my dear young master, ere I depart, to prove how devoted, even in death, is the last follower of the noble Oswy, to the last descendant of his house. Let me do this, and I shall die happier, easier. Who has injured you? what has happened?"

"The worst that could befall me. I have quarrelled with, and I must say it,—I have misbehaved myself to Abbot Baldwin. A circumstance arose which displeased him,—he struck me a blow, and I could not brook it. I attempted I know not what, to show my resentment; I told him to his teeth, I was more noble in blood, lineage, and spirit than himself. I abandoned the abbey, broke every law of the school to which I am sworn, and fled to thee.—I could not brook a blow."

“No,” exclaimed Wulfred, as the light of an impassioned feeling once more flashed from his dim eyes; his countenance, for the moment, becoming flushed, and his whole frame seeming to undergo a change, so greatly was he affected by what he heard. Indeed, the effect on his countenance might, without any exaggeration, be compared to the sudden light which bursts from the electric fire within the cloud, and for an instant illumines with a brilliancy more than natural the whole of its dark surface. “No, Cædmon, no,” he continued with energy, “a Saxon born thane must not brook a blow. We will resent it. I was thy grand-sire’s armour-bearer—I am still thy vassal—I can do something yet—could I but rise from this bed;” he made an effort as if he would do so. “I would yet arm me and avenge thy wrongs on the cruel Norman’s head, — but, alas!” he added, as he relapsed into weakness from the exhaustion produced by his own energy, “it is bootless; it will not be; human weak-

ness prevails, and the old servant can do nothing but weep with his master when the sword that he would wield for him drops from his feeble grasp. Life wanes fast with me ; Cædmon, come nearer ; give me thy hand — and hear all I can do to serve thee.”

He paused—Cædmon obeyed ; and, after having in some measure recovered strength, he thus continued, but in weaker accents, and in periods that became slow and broken. “ Oh, young man, hear the last monitions of a dying friend. Thou hast a noble spirit, but beware it leads thee not into vain contests with those who are as much too powerful for thy weak and oppressed condition, as yonder weapon is for this weak and unnerved hand. The Norman has now the rule in England ; the Saxon is degraded to the dust. Let it be so for a while. It is God’s will, and there is no fighting against that ; and remember, though the Norman may make a slave of thee, they cannot degrade the mind of a brave man ; his mind is his better

part. Remember that merit in a low fortune is nobler than the station of a prince, where there is none. Our Lord Oswy was wont to say so, and he was a wise and a good chief. And now, farewell, my beloved young master,—farewell. Bertha knows all I would have done about my burial. She will tell you, and you will see the last rites done decently ; you will see this worn-out body laid in the dust in peace.”

Cædmon wept, and assured him he would do all to fulfil his wishes when he should be no more ; and would never cease to cherish with affection the memory of one so good, so devoted to himself, as Wulfred.

“ Yes,” said the dying man, “ you will remember me, I believe it ; and you will help to pile the cairn, where the bones of poor Wulfred the faithful follower of your house, are laid to rest. And to this cottage will you sometimes come also ; you will not pass the door, that was Wulfred’s, at the eventide, without stopping

to cast a kindly look upon it ; and the thoughts will come back upon your heart, of how often you have seen the old man, sitting at his own door, as the light of the setting sun shone upon his white hairs, and he would rise to bid you welcome ; you will give a sigh, may be, to see how altered are all things since he was gone ; that the little garden, in which he laboured, lies neglected ; that it failed, when his strength failed who for so long a time had dressed it ; and then, may be, dear Cædmon, you will pluck a flower from among the weeds that will spring up, and will bear it away with you, for the memory's sake of old Wulfred."

Again he paused ; a little recovered, he spoke once more. " And if you can,—but no, you cannot, for you must fly this country. Never mind it then. Bertha will take home to her my dog, old Harold there ; she will care for him, as long as the poor thing lives, in memory of me. And my Lady Alicia de Beaumont is not hard-

hearted, though she is a Norman. I hope she will let my kinswoman, Bertha, have the cottage ; all I have in it, I leave to her, except my arms ; they will go to Edmund—to—I feel very chilled, my sight is dimmer, and the room seems to turn with me.”

He sunk back on his straw as he spoke ; Bertha offered him again a cordial, but he could taste only a few drops.

“ No,” he said, “ no, it will not help me ; life is on the wane, and my hours are nearly told, the glass has nearly dropt its last sands for me. On every limb Death lays his hand ; by and by he will chill the heart, and when that is cold, who would wish to linger here ? Pray for me.”

Both Cædmon and Bertha did so ; as they sunk on their bended knees beside his straw, they prayed with fervour.

Wulfred now changed visibly ; he could no longer raise himself from the pillow, but he lifted up his hands, and seemed to gaze intently

on his fingers' ends :— "They are numbed," he said ; "I have no feeling in them, and my legs, and my feet, are all as cold as ice. Is it night yet ? it is very dark and dull."

"It is not night yet, my dear Wulfred," replied Cædmon ; "but evening—the sun is almost set—there will soon be no light."

"Oh ! but there will be light for me," said Wulfred ; "I see it now, for an angel with bright locks, like waving gold, and wings as silvered as those of the dove on the altar of our church, flits before my bed and smiles upon me. And now the figure beckons, and lifts her veil—Oh ! holy saints ! it is my mother's spirit ! she comes to watch over the death-bed of her son, to call him hence to her. Oh ! blessed mother, I come—Wulfred will not tarry—Cædmon—Bertha—where are you ? gone—no one near me—save me !"

"From what, Wulfred ; who would harm you."

"The Norman, the Norman victors ; they

have me down now—down at the base of the cross. They have borne away Oswy's body ; and would keep me from that blest spirit who now watches for my soul,—but I will not be kept off—will not—will not—my mother— ”

He fainted, the last word but half spoken, for the efforts he had made in these the last moments of his wanderings, to raise himself up in his bed, had been too much for him. Once more did Bertha give him her assistance, as Cædmon ran and brought fresh water from a neighbouring spring. He sprinkled it on Wulfred's face ; but it was all in vain : nothing could restore him to his senses : and in that state, after a convulsive struggle of some length, (for Wulfred had been a strong man, so that the parting of body and soul was not without difficulty,) the worn and weary soldier passed out of life, and slept the sleep of death. Notwithstanding his late convulsive pangs, so happy a serenity overspread his countenance at the moment of his departure, that it seemed as if he were not

dead, — as if he had but sunk into that “saving” rest, which is often but the prelude of recovery, and not of dissolution.

Cædmon closed down Wulfred’s eyes, and kissed his cold lips, as he said affectionately — “Farewell to thee, dear Wulfred—thou last, thou only and true friend of the orphan Cædmon. Something tells me we shall not long be sundered; and that the old and the young head may even yet be gathered under one cairn.”

The nobly born youth then turned to comfort Bertha, but she would not be comforted; for now her kinsman, Wulfred, was gone, she felt she was indeed bereaved.

“There is not a living thing left to care for such a poor old creature as I am,” she said between her sobs; “for who cares for the old, who belong to nobody, and have nothing to give or to leave? I and the dog there are all that Wulfred leaves to care for one another. —And I had been so long used to my kinsman,

and his ways, and at last he got so feeble, and gave me so much trouble and care,—poor old Wulfred ! I shall miss the trouble he gave me now. And he had a brave heart, and he was kind, there's not a thing left to be kind to me now."

And so she ran on, bewailing herself. Cædmon, finding all his efforts at consolation ineffectual, in these, the first moments of her violent grief, and fearing, when he should be gone, the poor creature might suffer by that stupifying sorrow which, in persons of strong feeling, is so apt to succeed the first burst of a passionate distress, thought he should render her a service, by rendering her busy. He gave her instructions, therefore, what to do about gathering together the few Saxons in the neighbourhood, who would, he knew, gladly follow Wulfred's remains to their last home ; and having learnt from Bertha all his wishes about the place of burial &c., proposed to pass the night in the cottage, and on the morrow to

attend the body of his friend to the grave, as he had desired.

All was speedily arranged, and Cædmon now endeavoured to compose his spirits, and to gain a few hours' rest for the night.

CHAPTER II.

Their tears, their little triumphs o'er,
Their human passions now no more.

GRAY.

The shrinking band stood oft aghast,
At the impatient glance she cast—
Such glance the mountain eagle threw,
As, from the cliffs of Ben-venue,
She spread her dark sails on the wind,
And, high in middle heaven reclined,
With her broad shadow on the lake,
Silenced the warbler of the brake.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THE course of our narrative now leads us to a scene wild and strange, where art had combined with nature to render it imposing.

In the very heart of the dreary waste of Dartmoor was seen, on the side of a lofty

range of heights, watered at their base by the rapidly flowing Dart, an ancient and stunted wood of oaks ; so old that they seemed to have become dwarfed by the very decrepitude of age : yet, as if to soften and embellish their decay, Time had entwined and garlanded their bald heads with many an ivy crown ; and many a coat of the finest and thickest moss encircled their limbs, and protected their trunks from the rudeness of the blast, and the fierceness of those tempests so common in the elevated region in which they stood. It was indeed a region replete with wonder and with awe ; and seemed to rise with a more daring front towards the azure dome, than the summits of the surrounding heights. It overlooked, to a considerable extent, the vast and silent moor, and those majestic granite tors which rose, as watch towers, on every side.

Around the wood of stunted oaks was seen many a rude circle of stones, the temples of an ancient superstition ; the hallowed cromlech,

the funereal cairn, and the rocks consecrated to the rites of heathenism by their deep and indented basins. The gentle rill of a pure spring that here found its source, ran trickling down the hill towards the river below, to which it carried the small tribute of its waters. The music of the mountain winds, wild as the harp of Æolus, awakened by their unseen touch, was here heard in melancholy cadence ; whilst the rush of the river, as it made its swift course over innumerable rocks, in the valley of the Dart, harmonized perfectly with their tones, and with all those sounds of nature, that seem not for a moment to break the silence of the desert, but rather to add to its awe ; even as a requiem for the dead adds to the solemnity of that silent sorrow which is observed by the mourning train.

The eye, from this spot, wandered over such a scene of grandeur as we have described, till the view was terminated in the far horizon by the waters of the Atlantic, only to be dis-

tinguished from the sky above, by a more brilliant and silvery appearance, than was presented by the clouds with which they seemed to mingle. Opposite to the height on whose side was the wood we have just named, arose another eminence, called in the ancient British language *Bairddown*, or the hill of bards. There the harps of a hundred priests of the ancient Druids had once rung out their "glorious chime," as, bearing them in their hands, and awakening their chords, in the ceremonies of the sacred procession, "the white-robed bards" had slowly descended to the great temple in the *cursus*, near the rock idol of the plain.

This spot, "the lonely wood of Wistman," had witnessed many an august and fearful scene of Celtic superstition; there the light of rising suns had fallen on the hecatomb of human sacrifice. The shrieks of human agony had startled the eagle from her cleft in the rock, as she screamed again in answer to the cry, and soared on her affrighted wing to where

the accents of misery could no longer reach her among the canopied and "curling clouds."

These were scenes of ancient days, that had once been common amid those stern solitudes of nature. In the times of the Saxons, they had been scarcely of a milder character, when Woden and Frea were the gods of the people, till the latter became humanized and enlightened by their conversion to Christianity. Yet, still, though no longer heathen, so primitive a race retained an attachment to their old places of worship, that lingered among them for many generations; and was not the less tenaciously retained, because, after the Norman conquest, laws and edicts had been employed in the endeavour to root it out. Thus was the law against the superstitious worship of sacred fountains (enacted not long after the Conquest) especially aimed against that most favoured of all the ancient rites with which the Saxons had mingled their observance of Christianity.

The little rill we have noticed in Wistman's

wood (whose waters, at the time of which we speak, were carefully collected at their head, into a large granite basin,) was a fountain of this nature. It was guarded by a Saxon sybil, who made her dwelling in a rude and rocky habitation near the spot. The whole scene was imposing, and calculated to impress the imagination with a sense of the sublime, such as elevates the thoughts and calls up “a motion and a spirit,” which in the midst of such profound repose becomes attentive to those holiest of precepts, that man, in the immensity of nature, seems to derive from the “still small voice” that is of God alone; and finds a tongue in every rock and stream, “sermons in stones, and good in everything.”

It was in the scene we have here but slightly sketched, there stood, at the time we open this chapter, the ancient Saxon sybil, Thorbiorga; a descendant, after whom she was named, of the old Norse fortune-teller and witch, who, according to tradition, had nine

sisters no less famous than herself in reading the book of fate ; and who, in all probability, made a lucrative trade by imposing on the credulity of the multitude.

In England, at the period of which we write, many such sybils of the Saxon race still lingered, more especially in the West ; and though both in person and by profession they were obnoxious to the law, yet had they such an influence, not only with their own countrymen, who still clung to their ancient customs, but even with the Normans, who often resorted to them for the benefit of their supposed supernatural powers, that they were seldom sought out, or brought forward to receive the punishment they deserved.

The Saxon sybil we have mentioned sat in a rude stone chair, originally constructed by the Druids, that stood before the fountain as it lay clear as a mirror at her feet. She was neither old nor young ; of a tall and commanding stature, with large but not ill-formed fea-

tures; and something there was in her countenance and demeanour that inspired respect. She was attired in a gown of green cloth, her head covered with the skin of a black lamb, and lined with that of a white cat. About her throat she wore a necklace of large glass beads, called *adders' eggs*, (a remnant of druidical superstition,) and from her waist depended a rosary of the same. On her feet she had sandals, tied with leather thongs; she wore also a Hunlandic, or magic girdle, in which was stuck her implements of the black art; a wand or staff of ash, ornamented with brass knobs, was resting by her side. Her hair, straying from beneath the lamb's-skin cap, hung long and loose down her back. Altogether there was something wild, but striking in her face and figure. She sat, knotting a long piece of twine, and tying into each knot a bunch of rosemary, yew, or bitter herbs. Whilst thus employed, she murmured in a low and not unmusical voice, the magical song in the old

Norse poetry called the *Vardlokur*. As she did so, she glanced her eye from time to time to the small narrow path which wound up the side of the hill, towards the fountain where she was seated.

At length the sybil paused in her song, and listened. Then arose the mournful melody of a funeral dirge, that was echoed among the hills; and, immediately after, turning round the abutment of a large rock, (that had concealed those who approached from her view, till they were within a few yards of the sacred fountain,) Thorbiorga saw the funeral train she had expected, and in whose service she was about to be engaged in the performance of certain ancient Saxon superstitions appertaining to the dead.

First came two aged women, followed by a few Saxons of the humbler class, and several children. Then a number of young persons advanced, bearing in their hands boughs of trees or flowers, and singing, in a wild and

melancholy manner, a Christian requiem for a departed soul. Next came an old Saxon priest, attended by Cædmon, the page, mounted on a horse, who, with a few other horsemen, followed as mourners for the dead.

Cædmon was now in a very different mood from that in which we last saw him : he was calm ; but in the melancholy that overspread his features, there was something that indicated a sorrow which had more in it than the soft and subduing grief occasioned by the sight of death : it was more like the secret working of some powerful passion of the mind.

After him came, laid on a bier, supported by four bearers, a corpse. It was covered with a cloak, and strewed with funeral herbs and flowers. The procession was terminated by a few of the poorer Saxons, all weeping, singing, or lamenting. The funeral train stopped before the sacred fountain.

Thorbiorga arose : on seeing the priest she bowed reverently. " Welcome, Father Oswald,"

she said, "Welcome. What son of the Saxon people is it who is brought here to lay his bones among the old cairns of our fathers? to lay them in the wood that was first consecrated when the Saxons became Christian, to the worship of the true faith."

"It is one," replied an aged man standing at the head of the bier, "who in early life bore his arms manfully; brave in battle, faithful in service. Age has at length borne him down to the grave; and here do we bring him, according to his last request, that he may lay his bones among his fathers, where the Norman will not disturb his dust. Our good priest, Father Oswald, the true friend of his poor Saxon countrymen, has come hither to give him Christian burial. He will not ask, as a Norman priest would, a mortuary fee to give him so much of English earth as may serve for his last home. Our conquerors make us pay for the very graves they have stolen from our soil. Thou, Thorbiorga, thou wilt here do thy part,

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—thou wilt sprinkle the corpse with the waters of the sacred fountain, so that no evil spirit shall have the power to disturb it, or to borrow its form, and so to appear, as it were, on earth again, after the cairn has been heaped upon the dead. Thou wilt also make thy funeral song for his decease, and leave none of our ancient Saxon rites unaccomplished.”

Thorbiorga bowed to the ceorl (for it was one of no meaner rank who had addressed her). “Thou hast honoured the brave and the poor by thy presence, noble ceorl,” she said : “all thy wishes shall be fulfilled. I will make my lament for the brave, who falls asleep, after the toils of a faithful life, even as he would after the toils of a day of battle. The mountain winds, and the birds of the desert, shall warble their wild music to the dirge of death. The corpse shall be sprinkled, the flowers shall be strewn, the cairn shall be heaped, and no rite left unaccomplished. And hither shall the Saxon come, who seeks in solitude and ‘moun-

tain independence,' all that is left of freedom to him who is the stern contemner of these cruel times, to make his moan for a brother."

Many who were present wept as Thorbiorga alluded to their unhappy and enslaved state.

She paused and thus continued ; " And when the hawthorn flings from its snowy blossoms its perfume on the gale ; and when the child of spring, the primrose, raises her meek eye, and looks on the opening loveliness around her, where bird, and breeze, and shower, and suns that cheer the earth, are all returned ;—then will Thorbiorga, at each glad season of the year, come hither to commemorate the obsequies of him who is now to be laid beneath the turf. All honour is due to the memory of the brave."

Thus, in a language that carried with it many of the epithets and much of the spirit of poetry, did Thorbiorga, as was common with those of her avocation, address the assembled Saxons in honour of the dead.

As she concluded, Cædmon, who had hitherto stood silent, approached the bier, uncovered the corpse, and looked upon it mournfully. It displayed the remains of a very old man, who had once been a man-at-arms ; for his shield, sword, head-piece, coat of mail, and javelin, were all laid on the bier. The countenance, though fixed in the pallid hues of death, presented the composed character of one who sleeps calmly and well. It was that of Wulfred.

Cædmon clasped his hands together, looked on the corpse intently, and then said,—“ And art thou gone, Wulfred ?—is all closed on earth with thee ? and was it but to find thee on thy death-bed,—to receive thy parting breath,—to feel the last pressure of thy feeble grasp, and to answer thy looks that spoke to me, when thy tongue could no longer find utterance,—was it but for this, I sought thee in the hour of my distress ! Thou true and only friend of the orphan boy, whose fathers thou hast served so long,—farewell to thee, brave Wulfred ;

thou will rest well after thy long day of faithful service.—Farewell ! I, who received thy last breath, will lay thy head in the ground, and then will I bethink me in what way it will best become the grandson of Oswy to honour the memory of his faithful follower in death.”

So spoke Cædmon, as the humble and simple mannered train of mourners stood somewhat apart from the body, leaving the ceorl and the young Saxon, the first in rank present, to assist in the more immediate rites that were to be performed ere the priest did his office for the dead.

These rites were few and simple ; though the superstitions of paganism were singularly mingled with those of the obscured Christianity of the period. To keep off the demons of Saxon belief, Thorbiorga sprinkled the corpse with some of the lustral waters of the sacred fountain, which she had taken from the spring-head, in an oaken bowl. This she did with a dignity of manner and energy of expression

the most impressive, as she muttered some words of grief, following the sun's course, in pacing round the bier and performing the lustral rite.

The body was next laid on the ground, within one of the many circles of stone that were found on the spot. The priest then performed his part of the obsequies, and no sooner was this ended, than all who had followed in the train commenced the work of burial. It consisted in throwing, with shovels they had brought with them for the purpose, a quantity of earth over the corpse, for it was the ancient custom of the Saxons, not to break the ground, but to lay their dead on the surface, and to pile the heap of earth and the cairn, or heap of stones, upon them. The earth being thrown over Wulfred, the attendant mourners next each brought a stone, and so continued to pile together loose pieces of granite, taken from the surrounding rocks, singing and lamenting as they did so, till the cairn was raised.

Then did the priest advance and planted a rude cross of wood, that he held in his hands, upon the grave. The armour of the deceased was next placed upon it, and there, under the watch of Thorbiorga, it was to remain till the third day after the funeral, when the next of kin, if a freeman, (for Wulfred died such, though originally a bondman,) would be at liberty to claim it and remove it from his grave. On these trophies of the warrior, agreeably to the most ancient of the Saxon rites, did the sybil of her people now hang her knot of fate.

The funeral ceremonies accomplished, the mourning train retreated in the same order in which they had advanced, without any refreshment but such as the pure fountain might supply to slake their thirst ; for Wulfred's kindred were not of a rank to give one of those funeral feasts (often converted into scenes of riot and debauchery) that were usual at the burials of the nobly born and more wealthy Saxons.

Cædmon alone lingered ; he stayed on purpose

to consult Thorbiorga, not knowing to whom to turn for counsel in his present strait, now that his venerated friend, Wulfred, was no more. In proportion as his former passions had been tumultuous, they had now sunk into stillness, but not into forgetfulness. The indignity he had suffered at the hands of the Norman abbot was to him an indelible dishonour; it was to his mind, what the barbed arrow is to the body that it strikes,—it rankled and festered in the wound. He knew not what to do, nor where to seek reparation for his injured spirit; for Baldwin was a churchman, and Cædmon a Christian; the person of a priest must be sacred in his eyes. Bitter, therefore, were his feelings; and he dared not, in his calmer moments, think of raising a hand against the sacred person of an abbot; yet he felt that to sit down resignedly under such an indignity as he had experienced was impossible. He was desirous, therefore, to find relief for his wounded spirit, in a bold and decided change

of fortune, where he might show to Baldwin, and to all the world, that it was from no craven nature, but from a respect towards a churchman, that he had had magnanimity enough to forbear all resentment. A calm and melancholy retrospection of past circumstances had long been the habit of Cædmon's mind ; it had hitherto preyed on his heart, in secret, and no one saw the fire that lurked within : but now, as a blow strikes from the hardened flint the spark which, till so struck, was unseen, even so had this one violent action roused into a flame, all the strong but hitherto suppressed passions of his soul. And a futurity that seemed to darken as it arose, presented itself before his imagination in characters of awe and gloom.

Not knowing on what to decide, in this turmoil of feeling and of thought, he was glad to seize on a way pointed out to him by the superstitions of his own people, to leave his conduct to a mysterious and supernatural guidance, like a clue of destiny which he knew not how

to unfold for himself with any hope of success. Nor must Cædmon be hastily condemned for so credulous a purpose ; he was no wiser than the age in which he lived, and be it remembered that the Saxons, in those half enlightened times, were, like the ancient Greeks and Romans, so imperfectly instructed in the truth, that the direction of Providence was considered by them little better than the will of a stern and overruling fate. Agitated by passions such as we have described, it was no wonder that Cædmon's restless spirit, torturing him with a thousand doubts and struggles, at the moment which seemed to him as the crisis of his fate, determined him at once to rush on destiny, and to learn from the mystic arts of Thorbiorga the course he had to take.

There was a repose, a stillness, in the elevated region in which he now stood, amidst the noblest features^s of the rugged moor, that harmonized well with this state of feeling ; so that, in language that was at once solemn as well

as energetic, he called on Thorbiorga to direct him in this fearful contest of his mind ; briefly relating to her those painful circumstances which he deemed as derogatory to his honour.

“Speak low,” said Thorbiorga ; “speak low, in reverence to this sacred spot. Here the eagle in her flight is awed, as she wings her way to the clouds. Speak low, for this is the hour of the spirit ; anon he will darken the fountain, and I will read to thee thy fate. It is the hour of the coming of Thunre ; he will brook no voice but his own, to be raised in these wild regions. There are moments when the winds speak, also, as loud as he ; and then will his anger rush abroad, as his dread lightnings flash from tor to tor, and all the rock-girt moor shakes at his thunder.”

Awed by her manner, and her words, as the sybil stretched forth her ashen wand over the sacred fountain, raised her head, and seemed to gaze with her prophetic eye on some spirit, invisible to mortal ken, Cædmon in a low but clear

voice, such as would have made itself heard in its articulate whisper, even among a crowd, said—

“Tell me what to do ; delay not thy instructions. I am as the stricken hart, that bleeds and thirsts beside the waters, even so stand I beside this fountain.”

“As the *stricken* hart thou shalt not be,” said Thorbiorga : “thou shalt strike him whose hand sent its malicious shaft against the *smitten* hart. I will give thee the means, and show thee a way to retrieve thy tarnished honour, and to win thee fame.”

Cædmon raised his head, looked earnestly at the sybil as she contemplated the sacred and wonder-working fountain, in which he could see nothing but the mirror-like clearness with which it reflected the deep blue sky, and the wild flowers and tufts of moss that grew and clung about its sides.

“Noble Cædmon,” said Thorbiorga ; “thou worthy son of a worthy race, mark my instructions. Put on thee, straight, the armour of

Wulfred ; it is at my command here,—I will account for what I do. Mount thy good steed, grasp Wulfred's shield, bear his javelin in thy hand, and hie thee to yonder plain. There shalt thou meet one to whom thou may'st render a service. This day, ere the sun had risen over yonder hill, did the tyrant Norman, Geoffrey de Malduit, send to me one of his people, to learn from me, if this day would be propitious to an enterprise he meditated against an enemy. I did not believe the tale : by acting on the fears of his messenger, I learnt all the truth,—that his master, Geoffrey de Malduit, was about to attempt a most daring deed. On this day the Lady Alicia de Beaumont purposes to quit her castle and commence a pilgrimage to the sacred shrines in Cornwall ; and the Lady Adela de Marmoutier goes to Mount St. Michael. Geoffrey means to intercept their progress, to seize by violence the person of the Lady Adela, and to carry her to his own castle. He has with him a band

of resolute mercenaries, and some of those recreant knights who, being disgraced in the Holy Land, have become reckless, and will do, at home, any dishonourable action. You will at once be able to distinguish this band of violent men, as I am further assured, that, in order to screen themselves from detection, they have covered their shields with black cloth, that their proper cognizance may not be known."

"A cowardly act," said Cædmon, "in any knight who may be entitled to bear his arms upon his shield."

"The Lady Alicia de Beaumont," continued Thorbiorga, "is the present possessor of the castle that was thy grandsire Oswy's,—that castle should have been thine. Hast thou then, Cædmon, magnanimity of soul sufficient to do a service to her who stands in thy place, in thy lawful inheritance, if right were done to the poor and oppressed Saxon youth?"

“The violence meditated by Geoffrey de Malduit,” replied Cædmon, “is alike disgraceful to honour and to manhood. Whilst thus threatened with danger, I see only in the unhappy lady who is the principal object of it, a helpless and persecuted woman, and not an enemy. For the Lady Alicia de Beaumont, though she is in possession of the castle that, by right, should be that of the orphan Cædmon, yet never has she been to him as a personal foe. I quarrel not with her because ill-fate to our house, and his sovereign’s favour, gave to that lady’s husband, the Lord de Beaumont, our lost Wilsworthy and all its broad lands. Both ladies now, therefore, come before my view as women in danger, threatened by a cruel foe to their honour and their peace. It well becomes, then, the Saxon youth, the grandson of Oswy, to prove to them and all the world he has not lost his father’s spirit with his father’s lands. Tell me what to do, and I will spare

neither heart nor hand in their service. This is a way, indeed, to wipe the stain of dishonour from an ancient name."

"Mount thy horse ; give the spur to his sides, and thy best spirit to the enterprise, and never spare thy speed till thou art at Wils-worthy. Demand instant admission to the Lady Alicia ; tell her that she owes to one of the despised Saxon race the safety of her own life, and the preservation of the Lady Adela ; tell all I have this day told to thee. If thou art swift, there may even yet be time for the warning. I dare trust thee, and thee alone, on such an errand ; for did the cruel Geoffrey know it were by my means his enterprise is frustrated, my life would be the forfeit to his revenge. But no matter, though young, thou art faithful. I will assist thee to arm, for thou may'st meet enemies in thy path."

The sybil did so, and Cædmon was speedily equipped in the armour of Wulfred. He was about to mount his horse, when suddenly a

sound as of something rushing in the air was heard above their heads. Looking upward, they beheld the outspread and dusky wings of a black eagle, the lord of these mountain solitudes, and at the period of which we write, a bird not uncommon amongst the rocky crags and majestic tors of Dartmoor. The eagle screamed, as she darted forward, and in another instant soaring to a height that the eye strained to reach in following her flight, at length dropt in the far distance; no doubt having fastened on some prey that she held in her grasp, though it could not be perceived.

The Saxon sybil looked on the circumstance with a prophetic eye. "It is well," she said; "thou art favoured, brave youth; the omen never yet failed. There is wrath in the fates, but not to thee. Follow in the direction towards which the bird made her flight, and thou shalt prosper. The prey has not escaped her beak and talons, nor shall Geoffrey de Malduit escape thee. Farewell, and remember thou hast ever

a friend in the Saxon woman, Thorbiorga, seek her when thou wilt, in her cell among the rocks."

So saying, she waved her hand, as Cædmon answered with a kindly farewell, and mounting his horse, which was spirited, he set off at as rapid a pace, as the steep descent amongst the fragments of broken rock that lay scattered round would admit, with every intention to follow to the letter the instructions of the sybil.

Cædmon had made his way across the moor, as far as where a small valley terminated a wild and desolate track of country. A wood, neither thick nor very extensive, skirted it on the side nearest to the river Tavy, which here made its picturesque course. A turn in the path entered upon a particular part of the road, which, from having a high bank on the one side, and some rocks and oaks on the other, had almost the character of a defile or pass.

As he approached this spot, Cædmon heard the clash of arms; and a bugle wound its

long note that rang over wood and plain, as confused sounds, shouts, and exclamations became audible and mingled themselves with the din of battle.

“It is Geoffrey de Malduit,” thought Cædmon; “he has availed himself of this pass to stop the ladies and their people;” and setting spurs to his horse, in a few minutes he was within full view of the fray. He saw, however, no women. The contest was with men, fierce, yet the numbers few. As he approached nearer, a glance at the arms and shield of a mounted warrior, who was vigorously encountering an enemy, informed him at once that the assailed was Sir Henry de Pomeroy, who had with him but a few supporters and his two esquires of the body.

Opposed to him was the assailant Geoffrey de Malduit, and his band of recreants and followers with their shields covered with black cloth.

In another moment Cædmon was at the

side of Sir Henry, whose sword had played him false, for it had broken on receiving a blow from an axe that was wielded by the ferocious Geoffrey. In this dilemma, ere Sir Henry could avail himself of another weapon that hung at his saddle-bow, De Malduit raised his axe and prepared to deal a second blow, that would fall on the head, and must be fatal. Cædmon saw the danger, and swift as thought flew to the rescue, and with that happy interference which is often successful from its very daring, interposed between De Pomeroy and death. He dashed forward in front of Sir Henry's horse, and received on his own shield the blow that was intended for the young and gallant knight.

Geoffrey, incensed at being thus deprived of his prey, now turned all his fury on the youth who had snatched it from him,—who had thus, as it were, come between “the lion and his wrath,” and with a second blow struck Cædmon on the head. He was instantly stun-

ned and fell to the ground, as an arrow from another hand penetrated his breast.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy saw the fearful stroke which had thus smote the Saxon, who had saved his life, by a presence of mind and a gallantry of spirit he had never before seen equalled in such a youth. Sir Henry called to his people to preserve the body of Cædmon from being trampled on by the horses. One of his followers succeeded in dragging it out of immediate danger from the press, to a spot near at hand, where Cædmon lay, insensible, but protected by an over-hanging rock. There the follower left him and returned to the scene of action.

We must here pause to say that the quarrel had been unpremeditated. Sir Henry de Pomeroy having that morning accidentally encountered his enemy as Geoffrey was on his way to intercept the Lady Alicia and her unhappy ward. The insolence of De Malduit had pro-

voked the fray in question, at the moment Sir Henry was on his road to Wilsworthy, (after leaving the abbey, where he had lodged on the previous night,) in the hope to procure an interview with the inflexible guardian of his beloved Adela. Cædmon had given his aid soon after the beginning of the fray. And now, Sir Henry de Pomeroy, prompt in extremity, as he was bold and brave in action, in a moment assumed the direction of every one who was with him, with the utmost ease. The huge shields of his assailants, with their sable covering, which was, as he said, "like a pall to their buried honours," were borne before breasts little in accord with the true spirit of chivalry. Those who bore them bent their lowering brows on their gallant foe, and failed not to sound both trumpets and bugles, in the hope to bring to their assistance a reinforcement of their band, which they knew could not be far off, as they were advancing from beneath the shelter of the woods.

No trumpet or bugle on the part of Sir Henry, gave an answering note of defiance to these sounds of alarm; but the shouts of "St. George for England!"—"Advance de Pomeroy!" according to the battle-cry of the few followers who fought on Sir Henry's side, rang till the echoes of the distant rocks, on the opposite banks of the Tavy, repeated their sounds, as the desperate onset was made with the brutal courage of men so hardened and so reckless as were those who composed the band of the bold and lawless Geoffrey.

A cloud of arrows, thick as hail, now fell sharply on Sir Henry and his party, whilst the reinforcement of the enemy came up from the wood. The cries of all who were engaged in the action added to the fearful din; as the sun glanced on the glittering arms of the warriors, and shield dashed against shield,—whilst their swords flashed fire as they struck in the heat of battle.

"He is down!—he is fallen!—Save De Mal-

duit!—protect his body!” were exclamations which rose from his band, as all rallied round their fallen leader.

This circumstance changed entirely the fortunes of the day. The followers of De Malduit secured their vanquished chief, who was severely though not mortally wounded, and retreated in no very honourable manner from the battle of Black Shields.

No sooner had they done so, than Sir Henry de Pomeroy, more anxious, if it might be, to save the life of Cædmon, than to follow the retreat of so despicable an enemy, caused his body to be carefully raised, and bore him alive, but most dangerously wounded, from the field; and there we must leave him, whilst we say a few words respecting the unfortunate Lady Adela.

CHAPTER III.

Rude was his garment, and to rags all rent,
Ne better had he, ne for better cared ;
With blister'd hands emongst the cinders brent,
And fingers filthie, with long nailes unpared,
Right fit to rend the food on which he fared ;
His name was Care ; a blacksmith by his trade,
That neither day nor night from working spared,
But to small purpose yron wedges made ;
Those be unquiet thoughts that careful minds invade.

SPENSER'S *Fairy Queen*.

IN speaking of the Lady Adela we must retrograde a little, and mention circumstances which happened before the day appointed for her quitting the castle.

On the return of Patch from his mission, her faithful attendant, Grace, had duly reported to her that her letter had been conveyed to

Cædmon, as she directed, with all caution ; and the noble Saxon had promised to deliver it with no less secrecy into the hands of Sir Henry de Pomeroy, and into those of no other person.

Satisfied on these points, the Lady Adela never doubted the rest, and felt convinced in her own mind that Sir Henry de Pomeroy would make some bold attempt for her deliverance. In what way it would be made must be to her a mystery, a mere matter of conjecture, but she confided in the hope, prayed for its success, and counted the hours as they flew as passed towards her rescue. Yet, though she hoped, she was not cheerful ; a lurking spirit of melancholy, even in her happiest moments, lay deep within her bosom, and forbade her, under any circumstances, to feel very joyous ; so true is it that the more delicate sensibilities in woman, though they tend to the increase of goodness, seldom render their possessor happy.

Many other causes, also, combined to raise within the gentle bosom of Adela the most painful feelings. She was about to quit Wils-worthy, and the care of her nearest relative, perhaps for ever. She could not but feel that, notwithstanding her extraordinary opposition in the affair of De Pomeroy, in all other matters her aunt had been most kind, most affectionate to her, and most careful of her happiness: and she now felt, though it might be excused by the circumstances of the case, that the letter she had despatched to Sir Henry, unknown to her guardian, and the services she hoped for at his hands, in contradiction to her wishes, were, after all, but sorry returns for the devoted care and affection of so many years on the part of her kinswoman. These thoughts were great tormentors, for though she did not change her purpose, yet she felt, as all young and good minds must feel, the struggle of doing what is doubtful in secret, as of necessity compromising that ingenuous-

ness of character, so beautiful in youth, and so natural to the guileless Adela.

On the day previous to her expected departure, she was more than ever depressed in spirits, for, alas ! no tidings had she received from Sir Henry, and all about him was wrapt in uncertainty and doubt, those twin offsprings of the old “blacksmith” whose name is “Care,” so admirably described by the ancient poet,—

“Those be unquiet thoughts that careful minds invade.”

On that day the Lady Adela, with the fondness for locality which ever inhabits a mind of feeling and of taste, begged her aunt’s permission to be allowed to visit the grounds and woods for the last time before quitting the castle. Permission was granted ; but not exactly in the way Adela would have wished it should be, for she was not permitted to visit them alone. She could not, therefore, indulge herself in that luxury of melancholy, in these adieus to her favourite haunts, which the deli-

cate in feeling can never fully enjoy, unless in complete solitude ; so certain is it that the deepest emotions of the heart rest between God and their possessor, and admit no earthly participation.

Adela sighed as she looked around her at those "pleasant walks" and "deep embowering shades," which she was in all probability destined to see no more ; and as she could not give full scope to her feelings in the presence of the ladies who attended her in her ramble, she shortened it and returned in silence to the castle. In her way back, and whilst crossing the hall, she met some of the domestics, and, as many of these doffed their caps, or saluted her with some other token of respect, as she looked on each for the last time, she felt for them a degree of interest she had never known before.

"I cannot," she said to one of the ladies, who noticed her dejection, "I cannot leave anything, animate or inanimate, about the old

castle, without feeling how unlikely it is I may ever see it more. No wonder, therefore, I feel pained ; for these old and valued faces and things are very dear to me,—dearer than ever now we are about to part. Yet I have been taught by good Father Hilary, who for some time past has endeavoured to prepare my mind for the change, that I ought not to grieve at parting with anything, all being so uncertain here on earth. Our health goes ; and who can say it will return ? Our beauty fades, and never comes back to us. We part with time, often idly, and we know *that* will never come again ; we say good b'ye to the past day when we retire to rest, and who shall make certain of the morrow ? These considerations ought to reconcile us to all changes that God may think fit to make our portion in the pilgrimage of the world."

Somewhat reconciled, though not cheered by these and similar reflections, the Lady Adela prepared to meet with composure the Lady

Alicia at supper, for the last time before her departure on the morrow. This was no easy task, for though she almost despaired of the assistance of Sir Henry, yet she was every now and then visited by a return of hope, which rendered her fears only the more acute and tormenting.

The Lady Adela and her guardian were to sup this evening in the chamber of the latter, not in the hall, where they would have been surrounded by all the inhabitants of the castle. As the hour drew near, Adela more and more dreaded the meeting; yet scarcely did she know wherefore, as there was nothing new to arise from it. The pain of parting was all she had to expect of an anxious nature; and yet, though convinced of this, she felt as if some unforeseen evil was to result from the meeting, so prone is the desponding mind to take up sorrow of its own accord.

During the whole of this day, the aunt and niece had shunned each other, for each felt

she had something to hide from the knowledge of the other ; each felt she was acting wrong, and therefore avoided as much as possible an intercourse which must be artificial, whence the spontaneous expressions arising from unguarded thoughts and feelings must be banished, and where all the confidence of old times and dear affections no longer could exist. Such a consciousness of change between those who have for years been linked together in the bonds of confiding love, is ever attended with so much of self-reproach, that it was natural the Ladies Adela and Alicia should now fear to meet each other more than they would to meet an avowed enemy, with whom they had never known the charm of unreserved intercourse and the blessings of devoted friendship.

They met almost in silence, and had recourse to a well-mannered reserve, as a shelter from that renewal of familiarity which both seemed to dread. Each was determined in

her purpose, the one to enforce the convent, and the other, if possible, to escape it ; no wonder, therefore, each feared that burst of feeling, which, setting at nought all the efforts of self-control, is generally followed, with friends so situated, by a candid communication of purposes and desires, springing from the inmost recesses of the heart.

They said little during supper : their manner was studiously courteous ; but it never once relaxed, — never so unbent as to allow either to touch on any subject of discourse that would awaken the sensibilities of woman. They were calm and friendly ; and as the Lady Alicia took pains to keep about her the ladies, and the chaplain, who also supped at the same table, the awkwardness of being left alone with Adela, under such circumstances, was completely avoided.

The hour of rest drew nigh, and, as the unhappy girl was to depart at early dawn, her guardian felt she must now submit to the

ceremony of taking leave of her. She summoned, therefore, a great resolution to her aid, and bore her part in these, the most trying moments of the evening, with her accustomed ease in the exercise of fortitude. She looked even cheerful, without the least appearance of such an air of composure being assumed.

But the less practised heart of Adela could not so master or mask its real feelings, and she burst into tears, as she folded her arms around her guardian's neck and earnestly and affectionately begged her blessing. The Lady Alicia gave it with a solemnity of aspect that was truly impressive, yet she said little ; she dared not trust herself with many words, but she looked disturbed, as if she felt much, as she once more gave a last adieu to Adela, and, under pretext that she should hasten to take rest to prepare her for her journey on the morrow, hurried her from the room to the melancholy solitude of her own apartment, where she never once closed her eyes during

the night. On the morrow, as arranged, and under a strong guard for her safety, at an early hour, she set out for St. Michael's. The far-famed Mount of St. Michael (where, according to history and tradition, one of the most striking enterprises of the stormy period of which we write was undertaken and accomplished, as we shall relate anon,) is too remarkable in itself to be here passed in silence, and ere the unfortunate Lady Adela is committed to its bounds, we must pause to say a word or two about it.

The Mount, though now but an isolated rock, showing its castle-crowned crest in the midst of the sea, was once, according to tradition, an inland rocky eminence, rising in an extensive plain. In ages so remote that no record exists respecting them, the encroachment of the waves upon this extensive flat is believed by geologists to have completely changed the scene, and to have brought the combined waters of the British, Irish, and

Atlantic oceans to insulate the rock, and to form that bay which is now one of the most beautiful in Europe.

From the earliest times, the Mount has been celebrated as a place chosen for the rites of superstition. During the sway of the ancient British priesthood, it was dedicated to Belus, or the sun, and committed to the charge of a band of female druids, amongst whom the most aged was held as a prophetess, and delivered her predictions from the apex of the mount, or there performed the cruel and unhallowed rites of human sacrifice. One of the most ancient names of the rock, in all probability, alludes to this practice, as it signified, in the Cornish tongue, *the mountain tomb*. It was not, however, permitted to remain for ever in ignorance of the true faith. According to a tradition still current in the West, about the year of our Lord 495, a holy hermit retired hither, and the apparition of St. Michael the archangel appearing to him in a vision of the night, he

named the Mount after his glorified visitant, and in a few years a monastery was erected on the sacred spot. To this Milton alludes in his *Lycidas*, when he speaks of

“The great vision of the guarded mount.”

Hence was it, from a very early period, consecrated to the worship of the Christian faith, and it soon rose into great celebrity as a place of pilgrimage. Indeed, so famous was it in this respect, that during the middle ages, (and till the time of the Reformation,) thousands and thousands of both sexes made their way to the shrine of St. Michael's in Cornwall, where such immunities had been granted to it, by Gregory and other popes, that a third part of his penances was remitted to every sinner who there made his prayers and oblations on the day of the archangel, or on the Eve of St. John. William, Earl of Mortaigne and Cornwall, and nephew of William the Conqueror, founded in the Mount a cell for hermitical

monks ; and soon after a nunnery was founded and endowed on the same spot, as the ancient chronicler says, “being placed contiguous to the monastery, in order to prove the superiority of the spirit, and the triumphs of the mind over the senses, according to the improved plan commended by Gilbert of Sempringham, in the year 1148.” The nuns were Cistercian.

But we will not follow up this subject ; we will not trench on the records of the regular historian more than is absolutely necessary for the purpose of our tale : we shall here, therefore, add but a few observations of our own, derived from a personal acquaintance with the scene.

St. Michael's Mount is an object fitted for the pencil of the painter, or the imagination of the poet, though it is of no great height, being not much more than two hundred feet above the level of the sea. The castle, the chapel, the ancient buildings with which it is

crowned,—the broken, scattered, and jagged masses of granite of which it is composed, from the base to the summit,—the sea for ever breaking over the lower portions of the rocks,—the vast expanse of ocean, the beautiful bay, and the distant view of Penzance, with the villages and hamlets that skirt the shores, are all striking, and combine to form a truly noble picture, rendered the more imposing by the air of defiance which distinguishes the old and weather-beaten watch-towers of the castle. The spells of antiquity, than which none are more potent with the poetic mind, seem to hang about the warlike mount, and, when the tide is up, and it is surrounded by its girdle of waters, cutting off all communication with the land, the interest is complete, and becomes invested with a character of wonder and of awe.

It was in one of the cells belonging to the nuns of St. Michael, which looked out on the broad ocean, above the brow of the old rock,

that, at the time we open this chapter, a female sat before its little window, with her eyes fixed on the scene around. The alternate agitation and repose of the waves appeared to engage her thoughtful and melancholy spirit. She was dressed in the white gown, the black scapula, and the white mantle and veil of a novice. In her hand she held a rosary, and, after a while, by the motion of her fingers, she seemed to be telling her beads, as the rule under which she had commenced her noviciate required she should do, at certain hours of the day. But though her fingers moved, they did so mechanically, for her thoughts seemed still to wander over the broad ocean, and to give that liberty to the mind, which was denied to the person of the captive in her cell. Need the reader be told it was the Lady Adela who thus mused ?

The hour was one of deep repose ; the sun was slowly sinking behind a curtain of fleecy clouds, and, as he descended lower and lower

towards the watery horizon, the effects of the glowing light and of the increasing shadows gave a character of indescribable majesty to the scene.

There are moments when the very hopelessness of our distress gives a calm to the mind, which it cannot receive under less calamitous, but more agitating circumstances. Even so was it now with the Lady Adela; she had already been long enough in the convent to experience the severity of those means, exercised by a haughty and unsparing superior, that gave her no hope finally to escape her toils. Accustomed, from her earliest years, to be absolutely under the command of another, of a passive temper, gentle, even to timidity, and deeply impressed with the most reverential ideas of duty, Adela did not dream of resistance. She thought only of her unhappy lot, and in the calm of her despair, indulged a fond but fruitless regret for the past.

In this state of mind she had of late found

some temporary relief in contemplating at the evening hour that ocean which is so fertile in supplying images to the mind imbued with a depth of feeling sufficient to enable it to commune with the poetry of nature ; and so noble are the emotions which arise from a contemplation of the vast and the sublime, that, for the moment, the afflicted spirit seems to quit its narrow house, to soar on the wing of the seraph, and to be with God alone.

So was it now with Adela : the rush of the sounding waves, the screams of the sea-mew, as they circled among the clouds, or winged their way to their nests in the rocks that beetled over the “ salt flood,”—the interminable expanse of waters, mingling, as it were, with the heavens that rolled above them and seemed but as the azure portals to a higher world,—all impressed her mind with feelings of the deepest reverence ; and amidst the majesty of created things, the spirit of Adela felt, for awhile, as if it were placed beyond the power

of man, and in no otherwise a sufferer than to receive from her melancholy imprisonment the most necessary and humbling mortifications to self-love,—her total estrangement from the fancied pre-eminence she had so lately enjoyed above most of her fellow-creatures.

“Alas !” said Adela, giving utterance to her sad thoughts,—“what is it I regret ? A few years of life that I had hoped to pass in the world with all I loved, and with one —” she paused,—tears rose into her eyes,—she wiped them off and said, “wherefore should I regret him, since Time has no stay, and ever takes in his flight more than he gives ? Had I continued in the world, in a few years I might, perhaps, have lost all I there loved ; or they might have become to me as dead, as I am now to them. The burial in the cell does but anticipate that of the tomb. Oh ! how like the passage of a human creature in this conflicting world, is that of the noble galley which I see yonder, gliding gently into this beautiful

bay. Many who now sail in her, may be, are fast friends or dearest kindred; yet those who long continue to sail in her must look for partings, sorrows, and separations; and the youngest mariner now in that vessel, did he go hence and return in a few years to seek the shipmates she now bears, would, in all probability, find them all departed, and that he but remained, like the last of a wreck, to strive alone on the waters of life !”

As Adela (who, like many a prisoner, had acquired the habit of sometimes giving utterance, in her loneliness, to the musings of her mind,) finished this sentence, a voice exclaimed, “The waters of life, dear lady? Why, if you mean yonder wide, dreary, and dismal sea, that I am weary of looking at from morning till night, you had better call it the waters of Babylon, beside which, as old Father Hilary used to tell us, the captive Jews sat down and wept,—for I am sure they are such to us.

If it were not that I try to look cheerful, because you look so melancholy and miserable, I should have cried my eyes out before now, for being shut up in this dreadful old place, perched up upon a rock, like a parcel of sea gulls in the middle of the sea ; only we are not so well off as they, because we have no wings to fly away from it."

Adela turned her head towards the well-known speaker, and the rosy, half crying, half smiling, plump, and good-humoured face of Grace Bolt appeared, in the midst of such a nun's dress as was worn by the lay sisters, who did the menial offices of the house. Such a face as that of Grace, surrounded by a white chin-cloth and a dismal black veil, with not a bit of her hair to be seen, looked most comically out of place ;—as much so as the chubby cheeks of a boy, carved in stone, intended to represent a cherub, but far more resembling an infant Bacchus, may now and

then be seen decorating the mortuary stones or pillars of a churchyard. It surprised even her mistress, who exclaimed,

“How now, Grace? who has put you on such a dress as this?”

“Why, my lady abbess, to be sure,” answered Grace; “she who puts on us all the dismal things of this place. And it is all for your sake, my dear young lady, that I bear it; or not the best lady abbess that ever wore a head, should have put such a dark, ugly, coarse, shapeless looking gown as this over my back, I do assure you; and not to let a bit of one’s hair be seen either! as if my hair were as grey as her own. I declare I didn’t know myself again, when I took a peep in the only mirror that I have yet seen in the house, that which hangs at the back of the image of our Lady in the little side chapel. Well, to be sure, there’s only one thing to console one for having no young pages here to look at one; for I would not be seen in such a witch of

Endor's dress, as I have now on, for all the world."

Grace Bolt, in her feeling lamentation over the change of her attire made by the severe lady abbess, to whom the damsel's smart personal decorations had been an offence, quite forgot the cause that had brought her thus unseasonably to intrude upon her mistress in her cell. Adela questioned her about it; but Grace thus finished the account of her own metamorphosis before she would proceed to the matter.

"Why, my lady, you must know, that my lady abbess said that to-morrow was to be a great day at the Mount,—a great day for all sorts of pilgrims and palmers, from far distant lands; for to-morrow is the Eve of St. John; and she said that on such a day, she would not have anybody about her, to be seen in the chapel, or elsewhere, unless she had on the dress of a religious, be she nun, novice, or lay sister. And so my lady abbess said, that

as I was here with you, if I did not choose to conform to rule, I should go, and never more set foot on the Mount. Then I thought of you, my poor dear lady, and that without me, you would certainly break your heart outright in this purgatory upon earth, as I may call it; and so, for your sake, dear lady, I determined to undergo the greatest of misfortunes; and I let the old abbess make a fright of me, as you see she has done. And now I am one of the *discreet*, I think she called me."

"The *discretæ*, you mean, or lay sisters, who attend upon the abbess and the convent," said the Lady Adela. "It was kind in you, my dear Grace, not to leave me, for indeed I could not bear to part from you; and yet to continue to keep you here against your will would be most unkind."

"It would be a downright robbing and murdering of me, my dear lady," said Grace; "robbing me of the liberty God gave me to look on the face of my fellow creatures; that is,

of one half of my fellow creatures, for here we see nothing but women, and they as miserable as ourselves ; and murdering me, by killing me alive, as I may say, with crying and breaking my heart. But I don't mean to stay here, nor to let you either, one hour more than is necessary to make our escape ; and then, dear lady, do but pluck up a good spirit, and we will cross the seas, get into Normandy, and you shall there take possession of your own castle and vassals, and leave the old abbess here to scream after us, with the gulls, when we are fled and away ; and if she sends a flight of them to carry her rating over the waters, we will forgive her."

"Alas ! there is no hope of escape," said Adela ; "else, rather than submit to have vows forced upon me, that my whole heart disclaims, I would attempt it. But hope there is none."

"None !" said Grace ; "there is Hope, and I would find her and have her up, though she had sunk down with her anchor, that the min-

strels sing about, to the bottom of Mount's Bay. Only cheer up, my lady, take a good heart, and hold yourself prepared ; for I am on the watch, and if an opportunity presents itself, and if it can only be got at through a key-hole, it shall become a key to unlock a door to set us free. I have news for you, my lady, great news."

"How ! what mean you ?"

"Do you see yonder galley, dear lady ?"

"I do," said Adela ; "I have watched its course for the last hour, as it rode so gracefully over the waters, into the bay. What of her ?"

"She contains," replied Grace, "so was I told but now in the locutory,— she contains a band of King Richard's men-at-arms, all coming to this rock ; that is, to the little fortress which stands upon it, and overlooks the dwellings of the poor people and the fishermen who live about the base of Mount St. Michael."

"Well, and what is that to us ?" said Adela :
"men-at-arms will not be suffered to come

near a convent of nuns ; and on the summit of the Mount they can do me no more service than if they were in Syria."

"I do not know that," replied Grace. "I, being no novice, only one of the *discreet*, or what-do-you-call-them sisters, am under no sort of vows. So there can be no harm done to me, —no whipping or walling me up alive, if I do steal out of the convent and make an acquaintance with a bold archer or two, who can draw a good bow, and let slip a cloth-yard arrow, for merry England."

"But they could do nothing for us, Grace," said the Lady Adela, "they would feel no sympathy with our distressed state."

"Oh ! let me try for that, my dear lady," said Grace ; and she added, raising her head and smiling : "I have known the time when a bold archer would have given a helping hand to fetch me out of durance, if I had ever been in it, for the sake of a little innocent kindness, and a good word or so from me. I will

not despair even now, though I have got on this black veil and old grey gown, only fit for an Ash Wednesday, when one does not care what one wears, when one has to lie down on the church pavement may be, and have ashes sprinkled all over one."

"Your hopes, Grace, are wild and vain," said the Lady Adela; "they are the hopes of despair, not of probability."

"I will say no more about them, then, for the present," answered Grace. "Deeds, and not words, should be my motto, if I were a young knight and bore a shield."

"And wherefore do these men-at-arms come hither?" inquired Adela; "hast thou heard?"

"A report is rife in these parts," answered Grace, "though nobody seems to know whence it arose, and it was only told to-day in the locutory, and it flew thence to the kitchen, and there I heard it,—a report is rife that the discontents of some of the Norman barons, enemies to Richard, are daily gaining ground in the West,

and that intelligence has been received of a plan in agitation to seize on all the strong holds for Prince John, Earl of Mortaigne, and to make him King instead of his brother Richard. And so, Mount St. Michael, not being considered to be strongly enough guarded, the constable of Pendinnis Castle has manned a galley with men-at-arms, and has sent them to reinforce the fortress here, in order that the Mount may be able to hold fast its allegiance to King Richard."

"I am glad of it," said Adela ; "and I pray the saints and angels that the royal and brave Richard may preserve his throne unshaken by his most rebellious and unnatural brother. When do these men-at-arms land?"

"You shall hear," said Grace. "To-morrow, being a great day with the pilgrims, the lady abbess fears that the landing of the men-at-arms, before that day is passed, would be attended with much confusion, possibly with disorder ; she has, therefore, sent her own chap-

lain to the captain of the men-at-arms to pray him to forbear to land his people, till after the morrow : meanwhile the vessel is to anchor at Mouse Hole, for by that strange name do they call a place among the rocks opposite the anchorage of the Mount. However, so short a delay in the landing of the king's men cannot affect us ; and, for my own part, I expect so much from their help that I have left off crying ever since I heard of the arrival of the vessel."

" I wish I could hope, also," said Adela ; " but, alas ! when my kinswoman and guardian, the Lady Alicia, condemned me to these walls, she compelled me to leave all hope, with my affections, at Wilsworthy."

" You shall not say so," replied Grace. " I will never believe but that Sir Henry will be as true to you, as, I dare say, Patch is to me, and that all will yet be well with us. I often think of the poor fool, and the good will with which he took charge of the letter that he was

to instruct Cædmon, the page, to deliver into none but Sir Henry de Pomeroy's own hands. But it never could have reached him, that 's certain. Well, we must all part, to be sure, one time or another ; and, may be, I may find a friend amongst King Richard's archers, if I can but win speech with them, who will be as willing to serve me as was the kind fool. And, may be, you, my lady, if it comes to the worst, and you cannot have Sir Henry de Pomeroy, may be, you will find some young knight, who will be just such another, as gallant and as handsome ; and, if we can but once steal away from this place "——

“ Do not talk thus, Grace,” said the Lady Adela ; “ I have neither hopes nor plans for myself ; my hope is alone in yonder heaven.”

“ And mine, just now, with our Lady's leave, on yonder sea,” replied Grace. “ And do now let us step out on the terrace, and only look at the galley yonder ; it will do your heart good to see her streamers, and to hear the voices of

her people, as they come up from below, borne on the wind to the top of this old rock. Do come and look at her."

So saying, Adela gave her hand, and was led forth by her faithful attendant in good and ill fortune, and from the ancient gothic terrace, which stood near the chapel, at the summit of the Mount, contemplated the ocean and the vessel, which seemed to be "sleeping on her shadow," as the sun declined lower and lower in the horizon, till the glorious orb was at last seen to sink into the bosom of the deep, as all the surrounding scene, earth, sea, and sky, became hushed into repose.

CHAPTER IV.

“ My master is of churlish disposition,
And little recks to find the way to heaven
By doing deeds of hospitality.”

I charge thee, invite them all : let in the tide
Of knaves once more ; my cook and I ’ll provide.
SHAKSPEARE.

THE Eve of St. John, from time immemorial, was celebrated at Penzance, and in the hamlets and villages along the shores of Mount’s Bay ; and though the celebration of that day was introduced into the Christian calendar under the protection of St. John the Baptist, the ceremonies observed upon it are considered, by learned antiquaries, to be of a much earlier date than the introduction of

Christianity into these kingdoms; having their origin in British times, and being nothing less than a vestige of the fires kindled in honour of Belus, or the sun, whose influence is greatest at the summer solstice, and whose god-like power to cheer the earth was duly honoured by the priestesses of the sacred Mount.

The ceremonies to which we allude, (not even wholly extinct at the present time,) during the twelfth century were at their height, and were at once wild, enthusiastic, and impressive.

Towards the close of day, (on the Eve of St. John,) it was the custom of the fishermen and the humbler classes to pile immense heaps of wood, and to fix tar-barrels to the tops of long poles, and so to place them at equal distances along the shores of Mount's Bay. At night fall, these combustibles were set on fire, and became as beacon-lights and bonfires, rendering the whole line of coast a spectacle not unworthy admiration, characterized as it

was by a volcanic appearance, as if its hundred fires were bursting from the bosom of the earth. Whilst by the lengthened reflection of their flames upon the waters of the bay, they became, in a manner, so multiplied, that the very ocean seemed to be changed into a sea of lava, glowing like a furnace, fiery red.

This extraordinary spectacle was rendered complete in its character, by the conduct of the men and women who were the principal actors in the scene. The former bearing lighted torches; and the latter, with their hair long and loose, formed circles, sang, danced and yelled, as the men, whirling their lighted brands with great velocity aloft, shouted in a manner so wild and frantic, that it has been compared by Gilbert to the fifth day of "the Eleusinian feast, or the day of torches; because, at night, men and women ran about with them, in imitation of Ceres, who, having lighted a torch at the fire of Mount *Ætna*, wandered about from

place to place, in search of her daughter Proserpine.”

To prepare for the Eve of St. John, at the time we open this chapter, was the great object of all the villages, towns, and hamlets along Mount's Bay. And many pilgrims and palmers were seen making their way to the holy Mount of St. Michael, at this most celebrated festival of the Baptist.

In the small town of Merazion,* or Market Jew, at the date of our tale, very few houses were inhabited by Christians, and these were

* “Merazion, formerly Market Jew, originated from its early market for tin, chiefly engrossed by the Jews. Here they sold various commodities, purchased tin, and carried on a most lucrative traffic for *several centuries*, admitting no other people to share in the profit of their concerns.”—*Gilbert's History of Cornwall*.

Sir Walter Scott, in his admirable romance of *Ivanhoe*, has painted in so lively a manner the persecution to which the Jews were subjected during the twelfth century, that little need here be said on the subject to the reader. But it is to the honour of Cornwall, that, whilst maltreated robbed, and murdered by Christians, in almost every other part of the kingdom, the unhappy Jews found a retreat of *comparative* safety at Market Jew in that county.

principally kept for the accommodation of such pilgrims as bent their steps to the chapel (on the holy Mount) on the great days of the year. Notwithstanding these places of public reception, it did sometimes happen they were so full that the late comers had no choice but to remain unhoused, or to take up their temporary quarters under the roof of some despised and unhallowed Israelite; and this was so often the case, that at last the Jews of Merazion found the days of St. Michael and the Eve of St. John festivals of no inconsiderable profit.

St. Michael's Mount, the place of such universal and penitential resort, was and is, alternately, as the tide flows and ebbs, either an island or a peninsula; being connected with the land at Market Jew (now Merazion) by a large causeway of sands, rocks, and stones, about fifty yards in width, and eight hundred in length.

In calm weather this causeway may be passed

(as we who have crossed it on foot can testify) with perfect ease and safety, during the absence of the tide. But when the winds are up, and the sea is rough, the isthmus is completely covered, even at low water, and the rock of St. Michael appears as an island surrounded by a stormy ocean, for many days, and sometimes even weeks together.*

Most of the pilgrims who visited the Mount observed the time of tide, and by crossing the isthmus at low water on foot, reached it in safety when the weather was calm. But many crossed on horses, which they hired for the purpose in Market Jew; and these animals, on their arrival at the Mount, were regularly stabled at a place of accommodation, erected for the purpose near the foot of the rock, as the path was too narrow, precipitous, and craggy to

* "It is now," says a recent observer, "passable only about two thirds of a day, when the weather is perfectly calm."

allow any one to ride up to the castle, convent, or chapel, on his steed. We have been thus particular in stating all these minor circumstances at the commencement of our chapter, because every one of them will be found essential to the full developement of that most striking enterprise, of which we shall have to speak anon, that was achieved at St. Michael's Mount at the time of which we write, and is still the theme of tradition.

Many pilgrims had pressed into Market Jew, as the fishermen and mariners, usually engaged in their craft, were busied in making their preparations for the evening, to celebrate in the wild manner we have already described, the Eve of St. John, the same being on the twenty-third of June.

Hitherto most of the pilgrims of both sexes, had come on foot; at length a small band advanced (all men) mounted on horseback, who were seen winding down the side of a gentle

hill, towards the town of Market Jew. They were dressed in grey frocks, had their hoods drawn close over their heads, scarcely allowing any part of their faces, excepting their eyes, to be seen ; and from the steadiness, indeed the solemnity of their demeanour, they appeared to be penitents of no ordinary description. It was also remarked that their horses were of the finest and most valuable kind.

On arriving in the town, they could find no lodgement in the houses kept by the Christians for the accommodation of strangers like themselves ; all were full. They made many inquiries about the Jews who were the most likely to be able to receive, handsomely, a band of pilgrims and wayfarers, and from the information they received, they made their way without the least hesitation to a house that belonged to a Jew named Sampson, who, with his wife and some of their kindred. there resided and drove a good trade in the traffic of tin and other matters.

The house of Sampson, the Jew, stood apart from the town ; it was situated on the beach, and so close to the rocks, by which it was skirted at the end of the isthmus, or causeway, communicating with the Mount, that the dash and roar of the waves, when they beat with fury upon the shore, was astounding to the inhabitants of a dwelling that stood so unusually near the margin of the sea.

The house was in other respects well enough ; it was large, ancient, and rambling, and had something of a castellated appearance. A terrace, turreted and battlemented, looked out towards the Mount, and was accessible from the house by merely stepping out upon it from a door of one of the principal apartments. A court, guarded by a high wall, and entered by strong gates, was situated on the town side the building, so that on any occasion of apprehension, Sampson could, for a while at least, render his house his castle.

But as all attempts at resistance on the

part of the abused children of Israel, were sure at this period to be requited with the most cruel exercise of arbitrary power, the prudent Sampson, unlike his great namesake, never became warlike, excepting on occasions of immediate danger, or of stern and absolute necessity. At all other times, he was a man of peace, having in himself all the usual characteristics of his people, in a season of universal suffering and degradation with their unhappy race.

Sampson had the keen eye for gain, the jealousy of observation, the ever active suspicion, the subtle dealing, and the mean cunning, which, almost without exception, distinguished those outcasts of Judea who, during the twelfth century, were as wanderers over the face of the whole earth. Nor were the unhappy Jews to be too severely censured for faults that arose from the ferocious prejudices, the inhumanity and injustice of the Christians.

Yet their passiveness, their industry, their

prudence and spirit for commercial enterprise, their determined adherence to the prejudices of their nation, with their wonderful command of money, credit, and negociation, altogether made them so useful to their Christian tyrants, that they were alternately encouraged, tolerated, caressed, or robbed, persecuted, and even murdered, as the predominant interest of those who so used them might prevail.*

Sampson was, in his day, one of the greatest tin merchants and miners of Cornwall; and so useful had he been as a money lender, that certain abbeys (whose superiors were more lavish in their expenditure, than nice in the means of supplying it) had received even episcopal censure for contracting loans on a usurious payment of interest, with Sampson

* Hollinshed mentions the dreadful manner in which some thousand Jews in England were robbed and murdered by certain knights, previously to their expedition to the Holy Land, in the twelfth century. There is every cause to believe the Jews of Market Jew, Cornwall, escaped these injuries at the period just named.

the Jew. This circumstance, inducing at least a degree of intercourse between the Israelitish money lender and the abbeys, might have rendered Sampson the less reluctant to accommodate a Christian pilgrim or two, in a case of necessity. Be this as it may, he was now called on to do so, by the band of mounted pilgrims we have just named, who purposed merely to rest under the shelter of his roof, till a certain hour in the afternoon, when they intended to cross the isthmus in their visit to the Mount.

Their summons at the portal of Sampson was tardily answered ; and, ere the gates were slowly unbarred, a pair of black eyes, keenly scrutinized them from a small grating, or peephole, at the side of the oaken and nail-headed door. Probably those wary eyes saw nothing to be apprehended in a band of men so peaceable, and bent on a purpose so harmless as that of pilgrimage.

The door was at length opened, and Samp-

son, the Jew, stood before them. He was lean and gaunt; and a spirit of subtlety, ever watchful for gain, or for suspicion, seemed to lurk in his contracted lids, as the dark eye beneath, darted forth keen glances of observation.

He was dressed in a gown of black serge, girt round the middle with an embroidered girdle; his head was bare, for he hated to place on it the yellow cap which, by law, the Jews of this period were compelled to adopt, as a mark of their disgrace.

His leanness, a sternness of countenance, which not even his lowliness of manner could wholly overcome, and his hollow-set eyes, altogether presented a face that had in it something wildly characteristic. In moments of less interest, those who had now gained admission at his house would have looked upon such a man as Sampson, with no common degree of curiosity; but, as it was, they were too much bent on their own purposes to heed him.

The pilgrim who acted as spokesman for the rest, appeared to be the leader of the party. He requested that they might all be accommodated with house-room and refreshment ; and that he and one of his companions might be conducted into an apartment by themselves. As he spoke, the leader threw somewhat back his hood, and the Jew gave him a look of yet nicer scrutiny, but withdrew his eyes, and fixed them on the ground, the instant he saw that he was observed.

All was done that had been requested ; and the principal pilgrim, with his chosen companion, were conducted into a large old chamber, that opened on the terrace fronting the Mount. They stepped out upon it, as soon as they entered, and looking towards the rock, commenced an earnest conversation, with which at present we have no concern ; but we must now attend Sampson the Jew, and see how he took the arrival of these pilgrim claimants on his hospitality. He seemed not to like them ; but he

was too much governed by fear to express his disapprobation to any but his wife.

After having seen them all accommodated, he sought his spouse, Miriam, in her own apartment. She was somewhat advanced in life, yet not very old; she had a noble person, and looked to be an Israelite of a better order than her husband. She was rather richly attired, in velvet of Genoa, and her head was covered by a long veil that hung down her back and nearly touched the floor. The richest border, composed of the most brilliant feathers of foreign birds, ornamented her kirtle, and a long tippet of the same was thrown across her shoulders. A couple of very small steel mirrors were fastened in her sleeves, like brooches, to confine their fulness, a fashion with the Jewish women of her day, that was derived from the highest antiquity. She was busied in preparing, with much care, a decoction from some herbs that lay in a basket.

“Miriam,” said her husband, addressing her

as he entered; “Miriam, but on this day I should rather call thee Mara, for the God of Israel hath, I fear, dealt very bitterly with us. He hath brought spies upon us; they are even now under our roof.”

“Spies!” exclaimed Miriam—“spies! surely not, my husband. I saw but a band of harmless Christians, who come here to worship the angel Michael in yonder Mount; forgetful of the great law, thou shalt worship none but the Lord thy God. Spies, I trust they are not. It is thy fear, husband, that makes them seem such to thee.”

“It is not so,” replied Sampson; “Holy Abraham, I would it were no other. Yet, Miriam, the mischief that I fear is not to us; my fear is for one now under our roof, to whom, thou and I, Miriam, in years long since past, owe the saving of both our lives; and that great recompence beside which she made to thee for the service thou didst her in Normandy;

the service, I mean, about the Christian infant, the female child."

"You speak of the Lady Alicia de Beaumont," said Miriam, "who came last night to our dwelling, weary and worn with her long pilgrimage and her many sorrows. She hath good reason, indeed, that the world should not know that she sojourns in the house of Sampson the Jew, and his wife Miriam. I have placed the noble Nazarene lady in a chamber above, by herself, where no one but myself and the damsel, Orpha, can resort to her. No one who comes hither can disturb her repose or intrude upon her sorrows. Whatever may be her sins to her own people, the lady has been a good lady to us, and we owe to her all we possess."

"Yea, under favour of the God of Abraham," said Sampson. "By touching the heart of a cruel enemy, so that it softened at the last; like the heart of Pharoah when he let the

children of Israel go, even so did the Baron de Marmoutier at length let us go, after he had held us in the bondage of the dungeons in his castle in Normandy, and our lives were as nothing worth. To the Lady Alicia do we owe, under God, the very breath of our nostrils, for she it was who interceded for us with her brother, the gloomy Norman; till he, at her instance, forgave our supposed offence and bade us go in peace. I have not, and will not forget this act of mercy in the Christian lady. Where is she now?"

"She sleeps," said Miriam; "last night she did not rest well. She will tarry here for a few days, till she has visited the unhappy Lady Adela; the child whom I nursed at my own bosom, when my sweet infant, Ruth, died; when the natural mother of the Lady Adela dared not to acknowledge her own offspring, but was compelled to put away her child, even as were the Hebrew women, when they suffered under the hard bondage of the Egyptians."

“Ay,” said Sampson; “thou didst a noble service to the Lady Alicia; and thou wast the means of preserving the Christian infant, which must otherwise have been laid down to die, for want of nurture, even as was Ishmael in the desert wilderness.”

“And nobly did the Lady Alicia requite that service,” said Miriam; “for without her powerful aid, we had never found the means to pass over into England, or to commence the world again, and to be what we now are.”

“And to keep what we now have,” said Sampson, “we must be wary. The Lady Alicia hath instructed us both in certain matters that we will not name, lest the very stones should find a listening ear. You know my meaning. What would she say then, did she know that one is here, here in this very house, whom she would least desire to see in the neighbourhood of yonder Mount?”

“Of whom speak you?” inquired Miriam.

“Hark in thine ear, for I will not utter his

name above my breath—" Sampson stooped, whispered ; Miriam started.

"Holy Father Abraham," she said, "this is an unlooked for evil ! But I will be on the watch : the lady and he shall not meet. She shall not know of his presence : that is, not know of it, unless one thing should happen,—and then" ——

"It must not be," said Sampson. "If this thing is noised abroad, it may bring the power of the county upon my house. My goods and my monies may be forfeited, and we may both again suffer durance."

"The strait is a narrow one," said Miriam ; "but fear not, husband, we will be cautious ; and we are too much accustomed to danger and sudden perils to be startled by them now."

"Do you then, Miriam, look to the lady," said Sampson, "and I will keep watch over these pilgrims till they depart ; that will be in a few hours. I will, also, keep an eye to the pelf ; for hast thou not heard, that there are

King Richard's men-at-arms coming to yonder Mount? and such, we know, ever persecute and grievously harass the poor remnant of Israel. They have a keen eye to the pelf; but I will take measures trebly to secure that which is mine, by the hard service of the brain and hand. They shall be kept aloof from my doors, with the blessing of our father."

"Thou art right, husband," said Miriam: "they are cruel men of war, those people of King Richard; they are like the infidels of old, and the Ammonite and the Moabite were not, we know, permitted to come into the congregation of God for ever."

"Ay," said Sampson, "because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them. Howbeit the God of our fathers turned the curse into a blessing; and even so will I do by this people. These men-at-arms shall not come within my gates for fellowship; but I say not that I will close

my heart against them for thrift or traffic. Seeing that I deal in the rich armours of Milan—the stuffs of Genoa, and the tins of Cornwall; they may need some, and for such purposes I must not deny myself to them. Wealth honestly gained hath upon it the blessing of increase.”

“Sevenfold hath been thine, husband,” said Miriam.

“And I will watch to keep it mine with eye, and hand, and wit,” said the Jew; and proceeding to unlock a large chest, that was in the room, he took from it several bags of weight, rich caskets, and other valuables; and then, touching a secret spring in the wall, a panel slipped aside, and disclosed a hollow large enough to be capable on any emergency of hiding away not only goods, but whosoever might wish for temporary concealment during a search.

Here Sampson proceeded to deposit several of his valuables, and, as he did so, he muttered, more as if thinking aloud than talking

to Miriam, a sort of philosophical comment on himself and his riches, pausing and resuming the train of his thinking, as his occupation and the interest he took in it would admit. Miriam watched his movements with an interest not less lively than his own; but, as she knew well his humour, and that he liked not to be interfered with in such moments, she did not offer to assist him.

“Five hundred byzants,” he said, “in virgin gold, and unclipt in the rim. In this bag a great load, a heavy, but still a good load,—the interest of the moneys lent to the spendthrift Earl of Mortaigne. It is well I got payment; no thanks to the Earl, however, but to his steward of the household. Yet he gave me scorn with the moneys, and called it usury. No matter if it were usury; it is but justice to have somewhat to recompense the scorner’s insolent taunts.”

“Those who borrow of you, husband,” said Miriam, “I fear, will ever scorn you, since

most who do so are spendthrifts, and such are ever worthless, and, therefore, are they railers."

"Oh! blame them not, my good Miriam," said Sampson, with a sneer, "profuseness is ever the mother of poverty; she spreads her sail, broad and full, for the rocks of destruction; and we, the thrifty sons of Israel, gather up great store from her wrecks."

"And yet," said Miriam, "there are moments when I doubt if such store be really a blessing. Thy unquiet nights, robbed of their golden slumbers,—thy mind tossed like a troubled ocean that never is at rest,—thy constant inquietude and vigilant fears, make gold a curse to thee."

"But I will never curse it," said Sampson. "I will hail it, as the children of the earth do the sun, when it rises before them, bringing blessing and fertility in its beams. Gold!—wealth, hard earned and dearly bought—it is a real thing. Gold!—it is no vision of the

dreamer's brain. It may be handled, felt, and stored.—Therefore, lie there," said Sampson, raising another bag and depositing it in his secret hoard ; " lie there, thou mighty engine, thou potent friend, which can bestow on man all that makes sweet his days and fills his cup with joy."

" Alas ! not always, husband," said Miriam.

" Yes, always," replied Sampson. " Would'st thou have power ? wealth can buy it. Would'st thou have place ? the judge's robe is often won and worn by potent gold. Would'st thou win favour with the great ?—honour ?—beauty ? The first is publicly put to sale ; the Norman, most especially, sells it, as he would a hawk or a hound. Honour ! buy merit with thy bags, pay the full sum, and none will question it. Beauty ! would man win beauty ?—these sparkling diamonds and these orient pearls,"—he opened, for a moment, a rich casket, as he spoke,—“these would buy a princess to a Jew's embrace ;—ay, a Christian prin-

cess, but not such a partner as thou art, Miriam; for thou art as a crown of honour to thy husband."

"I have done but my duty to thee, Sampson," said Miriam, "as it became a daughter of our nation to do unto her husband, in weal and woe."

"Oh! the fountain of my life hath been blessed for thy sake, dear Miriam," said the Jew. "I have rejoiced over thee, as the wife of my youth, the companion of my riper years, the solace of my age; and thou art to me as the loving hind, or as the pleasant roe. May the dew of heaven fall with blessing on thy head, for thou art very faithful; else would I not trust thee, though thou art my wife, with the knowledge of this my secret store."

"It is pleasant to thee to look upon it," said Miriam; "but to me it is not so."

"It is only less dear to me than thyself," said Sampson, "for I have toiled hard to gain it, and men love that which is won with diffi-

culty and danger. Here are more treasures than is even known to thee. Here lie bonds that are as the very life-blood of spendthrift heirs, their whole substance put out to pledge to the despised Jew ! Here are the very souls of misers,—parchments lacking payment for redemption ; and here is the hope of many a fool, who has given in stake his good lands in England, that he may have gold to equip him and his followers, to regain an empty tomb in that holy city where once the anointed kings of Israel held the sceptre of Jerusalem, till Jehovah, in his fierce wrath, bade that city and her princes, for her pride and her oppression, to come down and sit in the dust.”

“ Alas, for Zion ! ” said Miriam. “ When I think on thee, my very heart bleeds for the desolation of Israel, and I could, even as did her children in captivity in a strange land, take up my song of mourning, and find no joy in my people, whilst away from that pleasant home.”

Sampson sighed deeply, but did not answer ; he then made fast his secret store, pressed Miriam fondly to his bosom, and left her to attend on the Lady Alicia, whilst he went to look after his pilgrim guests, with a watchful and jealous spirit.

CHAPTER V.

But screw your courage to the sticking place,
And we'll not fail.
Now sits Expectation in the air,
And hides a sword, from hilt unto the point,
With crowns imperial, crowns and coronets
Promised to Harry and his followers.

SHAKSPEARE.

AT the proper hour for crossing the isthmus, the band of pilgrims, with hoods drawn close over their heads, quitted the house of Sampson, the Jew. The leader of that band and his chosen companion went a little forward, before the rest ; all were mounted.

The two foremost rode slowly, side by side, over the rocks. There was a pause in their discourse ; till, at length, the elder broke silence

and thus addressed the younger, with the most resolute air, as he spoke:—

“What we do, we must do suddenly, quickly. I know the enterprise is desperate; so is the occasion for it. There is no time for delay. The men-at-arms in yonder galley will land on the morrow; and then it would be mere madness to make our attempt. Our followers are so few: as it is, we may hope to surprise the men who now do watch and ward at the Mount of St. Michael with success. We may hope to render ourselves masters of the fortress, of all the place, in the name of the Earl of Mortaigne; and for him will we faithfully hold it, for it is a strong place; I will not doubt of our success. Art thou well armed, Cædmon?”

“I am,” replied the Saxon youth; “so are all your followers, Sir Henry de Pomeroy. Beneath their pilgrims’ gowns and cloaks, they, to a man, wear a shirt of linked mail, and carry both axe, dagger, and sword.”

“It is well,” replied De Pomeroy, “on the lives of our followers depends the success of our enterprise ; for we are, in comparison with the numbers who guard yonder rock, but as a handful of men. Thanks, however, to the whimsical old abbess, for one hope in our enterprise ; since she it is, I have learnt, who will not suffer the reinforcement of our enemies to land on this holy Mount till after the Eve of St. John. Ere that eve be spent, we shall, I trust, have captured this strong hold for the Earl of Mortaigne.”

“Yet not for the Earl of Mortaigne, noble Sir Henry,—not for the sake of that rebellious prince, rebellious to his lion-hearted brother, would I have joined your expedition,” said Cædmon. “It is my sense of the gratitude that I owe to you, who never ceased to watch over me, when I lay sick and wounded nearly to death. It is to regain for you, Sir Henry, the lovely Lady Adela, imprisoned in yonder cells,—it is for this purpose only, that Cædmon

now rides forth with you on an expedition which he deems to be desperate. Yet does he rejoice that in thus devoting himself to your service in this hour of danger, he can prove that the heart of the Saxon boy can be grateful: were it otherwise, it is not for Prince John, nor for his cause, that I would draw a sword."

"I care not for whom you draw it, dear Cædmon, so that you this day strike a good blow with it, by my side: for whose sake you do so, is a nice point that I leave to your conscience in the settlement with your priest about such matters. True it is, you may combat for me and the Lady Adela alone; since to gain possession of the Mount is the only means left to me, to set at liberty the Lady Adela; of whose captivity here, I was in utter ignorance, till her own letter, intrusted to your hands, was found in the bosom of your tunic, and made known to me the fact, whilst you were yet insensible, after the wounds you had received in the fight, that we now call the

battle of Black Shields. I instantly arranged the enterprise we are about, on this the first opportunity, to execute. There is another circumstance also, by which I am, in honour, pledged to appear on this day at the chapel in yonder Mount."

Cædmon expressed his surprise at the hearing of this, and inquired if he might learn the cause.

"You shall know all that I am at liberty to impart," said Sir Henry. "There was, in times past, a quarrel, in the Holy Land, between a certain English baron and my father, the Lord of Berry Pomeroy. My father gave his silver spur, an antique token, an heir-loom of honour in our house, derived from the hand of Charles Martel, that he would prove his honour was untarnished,—that the accusation was false ; or, if he failed to do so, would forfeit his honour's pawn. He met his adversary with gallantry and spirit ; but, alas ! died in the encounter. But I have always heard,—for I

was a child when all this happened,—that my father persisted in his declaration to the last, that he was the injured man. Now on this day, by a strange accident, the circumstances of which are too long to be here narrated, I have promised to meet, in the chapel of yonder Mount, a certain palmer, who, I know not how, is in the possession of the spur that was so pledged and lost by my father; and who has said that if I would give him this meeting, he would point out to me a way to redeem it with honour to myself.”

“And to do so,” said Cædmon; “must be with you a thing of more import than even to regain the Lady Adela; for without honour, neither life nor the love of that fair lady would have power to charm.”

“Thou hast a noble spirit, Cædmon,” said Sir Henry: “for thy sake I could lament the severity of that law of the Norman William which deprived the ancient Saxon thanes of their privilege of gentle birth, and made their

lands and castles forfeited. Thou would'st have ennobled thy rank, and not thy rank thee ; for even now, in the midst of poverty and dependence, there is that in thee, that makes me often feel the thrill of surprise and admiration at the magnanimity of thy mind. Generous youth ! thou may'st yet be spared for noble things ; I will not put thy life to the hazard to which it must be exposed in such an enterprise as this ; and that, too, at a moment when we hope to gain the Mount for the Earl of Mortaigne ; — to do so is scarcely a secondary motive in this adventure. Go then ; return in safety to yonder town, and there await, at the Jew's, the issue of this desperate enterprise : it will soon be known to thee."

"Never," exclaimed Cædmon, "never will I, in a moment of such peril, desert the friend who watched over my life, when I was houseless, friendless,—watched over me with a generosity I can never requite. On then, Sir

Henry, for my mind is fixed: I will live or die in the service of De Pomeroy."

"Forward then," said Sir Henry. "And now, my brave follower, we are near the rock. Silence now becomes essential to the success of our attempt. My people, to a man, know what to do."

So saying, they passed rapidly over the remainder of the way that lay between them and the rock. They speedily dismounted, gave their horses in charge to one of their band, who undertook to keep them in readiness at the foot of the Mount, (in case any failure should render retreat necessary,) as the rest prepared to begin the ascent. For some time they pursued it in profound silence; till, at length, the narrow and crooked path led to the outer portal of the buildings, where a guard was stationed both by day and night. In the course of the ascent, they had to pass a very small and ancient watch-tower which stood on the

extreme verge of a projecting portion of the rock, and overlooked the whole of Mount's Bay.

Before this tower Sir Henry paused for a few minutes, and held a brief conference with Cædmon. Should he at once advance and render himself master of the watch, or should he pass on, in the hope to reach the summit unsuspected? Hitherto not the slightest opposition had been offered to him, or his pilgrim band. Might he not now, therefore, by attempting the watch, cause, unnecessarily, a sudden alarm, that would bring down the whole strength of the little fortress upon him, before he stood within its walls?—when, did he now continue quietly his course, it was not only possible, but highly probable, he would achieve his object without interruption; and might accomplish all he had in view without spilling one drop of human blood; for though living in an age when, “in the trade of war, to slay men” was held as a thing of course, and of

little moment, Sir Henry de Pomeroy had a natural reluctance to shed blood unless it were in a case of absolute necessity. Hence was it that, though he had won a great fame in battle, he had gained none in the gentle exercise of the tournament, where valiant knights often killed each other in pure love, and for the sake of honour and renown.

This deliberation ended in the resolution to make at once for the great portal, ere himself or his followers drew a sword in their attempt. They passed, therefore, the little watch-tower we have named, in profound silence : if doing so might really be prudent or not, will be seen in the sequel.

They gained the second ward by a similar winding path cut in the ascent amid the rocks, forming in parts a hollow way between them. They passed this second ward unsuspected, as before : many saw them, but no notice was taken, as there was nothing more common than to see pilgrims and palmers on the Eve

of St. John, ascending to make their prayers and offerings in the chapel.

At length the party so disguised, mounted the last and steepest ascent that brought them to the summit of the rock. They stood on a small level towards the north-west, whence a flight of steps led to the chief portal of the buildings: ere they approached it, they spoke in whispers to each other. Each man loosed his belt and passed his hand under his cloak, so that he might in an instant draw his sword; and, two and two, once more, and in profound silence, did they proceed, mounted the steps, and stood before the great portal that opened into the hall of entrance (which communicated by passages and galleries with the convent of nuns): there a guard was stationed, as a portion of the buildings clustered at the summit, was of a warlike character, and had been especially erected for the safety of the Mount, to protect it as much from sea pirates, as from any other foes.

The door readily opened to admit the supposed pilgrims; all passed over the threshold. But no sooner had the door closed than De Pomeroy gave the signal; and in an instant his band disencumbered themselves of their long cloaks, drew their weapons, and rushing on the guard, overpowered them almost before they were aware of danger; so sudden, so determined was the action: its very daring rendered it successful. The guard disarmed, the assailants next took from them all means of resistance, secured the portal, and made themselves masters of the keys, promising not to injure a hair of the heads of the vanquished, provided they remained quiet; but threatening them with instant death, did they but raise a cry, or move a finger in opposition to their purpose.

Thankful that their lives were thus spared, when they were so completely at the mercy of their enemies, the guard yielded themselves prisoners without a word, gladly accepting the

offered terms. The prisoners were bound with the leathern girdles of their vanquishers, and two or three of the band remained to watch over them and to keep the gates. Sir Henry de Pomeroy then selected one from among them and offered him a large reward, would he act as a guide through the intricacies of the building: his object being to proceed at once to the deliverance of the Lady Adela. We must not omit stating that Cædmon was one of those left in charge of the prisoners and the gates.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy speedily found himself within the convent part of the buildings, and in the very cell to which he forced an entrance, he discovered his beloved Adela, nearly fainting with apprehension from alarm, and the violence with which the door of her cell had been burst open by armed men.

CHAPTER VI.

And in thy face strange motions doth appear—
Such as we see when men restrain their breath,
On some great sudden haste ; oh ! what portents
Are these ?

SHAKSPEARE.

To snatch her to his bosom,—to reassure her by the most earnest and affectionate protestations that he was there for her deliverance,—that she was his own, his beloved Adela,—that he would henceforth resign her but with life,—that ere he quitted the house, it was his purpose to secure her his for ever, by seeking out the priest of the convent, and compelling him, on the instant, to perform the marriage

rite, at the altar of the chapel,—that immediately after, he would place her in such safety that all attempts to part him from his bride should be vain,—to give and repeat to her these and similar assurances, was the work but of a few minutes: for so deliberate had been Sir Henry's plans, so fully had every possibility been anticipated, that the very cloak in which he designed to wrap Adela, to conceal her person, should he be enabled on that evening to remove her from the Mount, was rolled up and fastened to his girdle.

He saw her alarm; once more did he entreat her to take courage, to calm her agitated spirits; and, as she would save herself from becoming a victim to forced vows and perpetual captivity,—as she would save him from the despair which the loss of her must inevitably occasion, that she would compose her mind, call up her resolution, and on the instant accompany him to the altar. He had already despatched some of his faithful band, who had devoted

themselves to his service in carrying forward his enterprise, to find out the priest, who, by this time, must be awaiting them in the chapel.

Wondering, fearing, scarcely comprehending (in the confusion of mind into which she had been thrown by the suddenness of the transaction,) the nature or extent of her deliverance ; seeming but to be fully sensible that she was about on the instant to pass from the captivity of a cell, to that of being bound in bonds of the holiest affection to the man she most loved, the agitated Adela gave him, almost in silence, her trembling hand ; and it was not without a shock, for which he could scarcely account to his own mind, that as Sir Henry seized it, and would have pressed it to his lips, he felt it was cold and clammy. The idea that such a hand was more like that of a new-made corpse than a living bride, threw a chill over his feelings ; yet it was but a momentary shock ; and he speedily shook it off, as a superstitious feeling unworthy a man.

Sir Henry now drew Adela forth from her cell ; his band awaited him in the gallery that led to it. They had surprised the priest in his way to the chapel. With fearful threatenings, should he refuse compliance, had they explained to him the nature of the service he was required to fulfil, — their leader had determined to espouse the Lady Adela on the instant, she being his betrothed, who had been brought by his enemies to that convent against her will, with the intent to compel her by forced vows never more to quit its walls.

It is almost needless to add, that arguments such as these, made by armed men who seemed prepared for any violence, were not very likely to meet with opposition from a poor old priest, nearly fourscore years of age. He promised compliance, begged those who seized upon him to use no further violence, and not unnecessarily to alarm the sisters, who were the timid and harmless inmates of the house ; for so sudden had been this surprise, so skilfully ar-

ranged, and so resolutely conducted, that all we have related had actually taken place before the alarm had extended to the chapel, where a particular service, at which the aged priest was about to assist, was going on at the time.

As Adela, leaning on the arm of Sir Henry de Pomeroy, passed towards the chapel, anything but joy filled her mind. She had loved him more than life,—she had feared his loss more than death ; yet, strange to tell, and she could not account for it, she felt an indescribable reluctance to thus suddenly becoming his wife. She felt, at this moment, as if she should be glad not to become such at all,—as if the utmost happiness her affection could desire would consist in the delight she took in his presence, to share his converse, to watch over his welfare, and to do him faithful service. Yet, though she felt all this, she dared not give utterance to such feelings when she thought of the engagement between them,

that had been so violently broken, without any reason being assigned for it by the severity of her guardian ; she felt she should be ungenerous to her deliverer, did she now refuse to receive his vows, as he so earnestly desired, at the altar.

From what motive then could arise her reluctance ? for she was not capricious. A strange and undefined feeling, which she could not but consider as a presentiment of sorrow, of sorrow on their union, filled her heart, and a secret foreboding of evil, not distant, but at hand, took such strong hold of her mind, that she stepped forward to the nuptial rite with the downcast and saddened eye, and the heavy step of one who advances to a funeral.

What is presentiment ? May it not be nothing more than what an able writer on the operation of the human mind terms “a nice calculation made by the feelings, before we permit it to become an operation of the judgment.” Be this as it may, such was the state of the gentle Adela’s mind, as she passed under the

low doorway which led from the interior of the convent into the chapel.

It was an ancient Saxon building, that had been erected by Edward the Confessor ; the columns were of the plain but massive kind, so common with the ecclesiastical edifices of that early date. The richest carved oak stalls stood on every side, and the Rood, or Crucifixion, also of carved oak, was raised on the top of a highly-ornamented rood loft, or screen, that crossed the church, of a far more recent date than the original building. The image of St. Michael was placed on the altar, in the front of which stood a cross. The windows were high in the walls ; they were round-headed and narrow, ornamented by the zig-zag moulding, and filled with the deepest stained glass, so that the light of the chapel was dull and melancholy ; it was never visited by the bright beams of a cheerful day.

As Adela and Sir Henry entered, they heard the sounds of the organ, and in a sweet and

slow strain, there arose from the choir of nuns, who were unseen, (being seated behind a large black curtain, which concealed them,) a solemn chant. Adela shuddered—stopped—laid her hand on the arm of Sir Henry, and whispered to him, in an accent of deep emotion, “It is a requiem !”

Immediately after, from a soft and melancholy cadence, the requiem rose into a full chorus of majestic sounds. The colour fled from the cheeks of Adela, who became ashy white, as she clasped her hands, looked imploringly on Sir Henry, and said,

“Oh ! do not disturb the service for the dead. Peace be to the departed ! The nuptial rite should not be ushered in by the song of death. Let us go hence ; this is no time to think of marriage vows.”

“But mine are pledged to Heaven,” replied Sir Henry, with an energy that had in it something of frantic wildness,—“mine are pledged that I will never depart this house till I bear

you from it, Adela, as my bride, or am myself borne from it a corpse. Do you choose. It is in your power to make this as a requiem for him who loves you more than life, and who would gladly lose it for your sake."

Deeply affected by his words, even alarmed by the wildness of his looks and the desperate state of mind, which his demeanour, his temerity at this hour, did but too plainly express, Adela forbore to say another word, and passively suffering him to do what he pleased, he led her forward to the altar.

With a determination, an energy, quite in character with all we have already related, supported by his band, who stood with their drawn weapons around him, to the surprise, the consternation of all present, and to the horror of the religious part of the assembly, who looked upon the whole scene as little better than sacrilegious, did Sir Henry de Pomeroy declare that he now took possession of Mount St. Michael, in the name of John, Earl of Mor-

taigne, whom he acknowledged as his liege lord, and that, in his absence, he, Henry, Baron of Berry Pomeroy castle, stood there as its master and as constable of the Mount; that he would injure no one, disturb no one; that life and property should be safe to all who surrendered themselves to Prince John, and would join with him to maintain the Mount in the prince's name: that the Lady Adela was his betrothed, that she had been torn from him by force, and that he was determined to espouse her, at that very hour and in that very chapel, not doubting the pardon of Rome, which he intended to solicit, for taking a novice from her cell. Finally, he commanded all present, saving his own people and the priest, to depart the chapel, and, telling them that he was in possession of the keys, added that, not till the morrow, when the Mount would be fully armed and secured, by a reinforcement which he expected that night from the friends of Prince John, could he consent to open the

gates, so that any one should pass without the convent walls.

No sooner had Sir Henry de Pomeroy ended this address, than he found himself obeyed without the least opposition ; for so daring had been the whole action, that it seemed to have a paralysing effect on the minds of all who were within the convent on that memorable day.

The daring Sir Henry, the agitated Adela, and the affrighted priest, now remained ; De Pomeroy still supported by his armed band, who forthwith surrounded the altar. The priest ascended the steps, knelt before the cross, arose, opened the book, and turned towards the youthful pair about to be united under such extraordinary circumstances.

At this crisis, a figure glided from behind one of the massive old columns that stood near the entrance at the west end of the chapel. His form was large, his height commanding ; he was wrapped in a gown and mantle that

he seemed to keep close to hide as much as possible his person ; his arms were folded on his breast ; his cowl, for he wore one, was thrown back, so as to show his face, but not to leave bare his head. He stalked forward with the air of one who comes in the consciousness of power to enforce his will. Silence was on his lips, but it needed but a glance of the eye to tell Sir Henry, that he now beheld the palmer.

He stopped within a few paces of the altar, and, with a look so stern, yet so commanding, (that, combined with the fearless demeanour he had displayed at such time and in such a place, there was in it something awful,) glanced indignantly at Sir Henry, as he exclaimed,—

“ Forbear, young sir, forbear !” and stretching forth his hand, seized that of Adela, and tore it from Sir Henry’s grasp.

Incensed at the action, the fiery young man laid his hand on his dagger, and drew some paces back, trembling with passion ; yet, as if sud-

denly recollecting himself, forbore to draw in such a place ; but exclaimed,

“ Who dares bid me forbear, when I stand here about to wed with my affianced bride ? ”

“ I say to thee, forbear,” exclaimed the palmer, in a voice that made the chapel ring again with its strange and impatient sounds. Adela trembled, and felt its tones thrill to her secret soul.

“ And who are you who thus interpose yourself between me and mine ? ” said Sir Henry. “ Well do I remember that this is the second time you have wrought on my mind with fearful effect. But I will not be trifled with. You shall answer for this interruption ; you ”——

“ I will answer for it, and now,” said the palmer. “ If you are a knight, if you are a man, as you value honour, as you would save your good name from becoming a word to denote shame, the very scorn of men, I forbid you to wed this lady ; by the laws of chivalry

I forbid it,—till you have fulfilled your promise so solemnly given to me,—that on the Eve of St. John you would attend me ;—you would redeem your father's token, lost with his honour and his life ; or that failing to do this, you would admit as true, that the pledge was justly forfeited. To this are you sworn by the word of a true knight, for this is the Eve of St. John, and I am here to demand a fulfilment of your promise."

"I will not shrink from it," replied Sir Henry. "You have spoken but the truth ; and by the laws of chivalry, I may not indeed wed till I have redeemed a pledge so solemnly given. Give me then to know my opponent, for he must act with your knowledge ; I do not fear his encounter."

"Know him then in me," said the palmer.

"In you !" exclaimed Sir Henry ; "you are under vows of penitence and discipline,—impossible ! you wear but a palmer's gown ; yours is no champion's coat."

“Look then on this,” said the palmer, drawing aside the gown in which he had been so carefully muffled, so as to show beneath it, the glittering rings of a coat of chain mail. “Think you,” he added, in somewhat a scornful manner, “that *your* band alone can wear a pilgrim’s frock, to hide a coat of steel. I am, Sir Henry de Pomeroy, even as yourself, a sworn knight. On this, the Eve of St. John, my vow of discipline expires. To-morrow I am a free man. To-morrow I will meet you; and will then give you such reasons for the interruption of this night’s ceremony, as shall fully satisfy your utmost doubt,—and if not, our swords must answer it. Remember your plighted word,—you may not quit this Mount, till our conference is ended, till the token of a father’s lost honour be acknowledged or redeemed.”

At this moment, there was a movement without the chapel; in the next Sir Henry beheld the faithful Cædmon, who rushed in pale and breathless with alarm.

“Oh ! my dear lord,” he exclaimed, as he cast a look of affectionate concern on Adela, “you must on the instant fly the Mount, or perish. We are discovered ; not one of your band but will be put to the sword.—Fly ! there is no safety but in flight.”

“Discovered !” said the Lady Adela ; “Oh ! Sir Henry, save yourself. Be not alarmed for me ; save yourself, and I shall be safe. I fear no danger ; I am prepared to meet the worst.”

“Are we betrayed ? — how discovered ? — what mean you ?” said Sir Henry.

“I can scarcely satisfy you,” replied Cædmon : “all I know is this, that the abbess has contrived to give some intimation of what has happened, by means of an underground passage from the convent to the watch-tower that we passed in our ascent ; and a signal has been made to the galley with King Richard’s men-at-arms : they are making for the shore ; in less than an hour will they be landed,

and will be masters of us, and of the Mount ; for few indeed are we in number."

"How know you this is true?" said Sir Henry.

"One of our people, who passed forth to gain intelligence, soon learnt the truth ; our fears being first awakened by observing, from one of the windows of the Hall, the signals of the watch-tower, and the galley on the stir towards the shore. No efforts on our part can now avail ; we must be overpowered by numbers ; flight, immediate flight can alone save you, and all. Our horses await us at the base of the Mount ; we may yet cross ere the tide be risen so as to render crossing impossible. But if there is delay, the sea, no less than the land, will be our enemy."

Sir Henry de Pomeroy refused to hear more ; but even the palmer seemed shocked at this prospect of a danger so unavoidable to that daring friend of the rebel John. He conjured him not rashly to throw away his life ; but to give orders

that his followers should abandon the Mount, as it was impossible they could maintain it without the help of a reinforcement, that would now come too late. Adela, anxious for his safety, implored him not to linger to meet certain death,—a death that would consign them both to one grave.

This last remonstrance had the desired effect, and Sir Henry gave over the first rash thoughts of his heart, to stay and fall on the spot, rather than abandon the advantage he had gained for the Earl of Mortaigne. But now he turned to the weeping Adela, and declaring that he would never consent to part from her more, and that in moments of danger and of death, she was as dear to him as in those of life and joy, he hurried her from the chapel, threw the cloak he had brought with him for the purpose over her shoulders, and followed by his band of men-at-arms, and by the palmer, who declared he would not leave him till the object of their meeting should be fulfilled, hastened to reach

the base of the rock ere it would be too late to cross the isthmus. Cædmon had gone forward, so that their horses were in readiness ; they reached them without interruption, for their retreat had been as sudden as their victory. The whole enterprise was, indeed, one of so much daring and of so extraordinary a nature, that, were not such acts common at the period, it would seem but as a fiction of the wildest and most romantic character and description.

CHAPTER VII.

The strife of fiends is on the battling clouds,
The glare of hell is in these sulphurous light'nings ;
This is no earthly storm.—

Of winds and waves, the strangely mingling sounds,
Ride heavily the night-wind's hollow sweep,
Mocking the sounds of human lamentation.

MATURIN'S BERTRAM.

THE isthmus, which, when left by the tide, admitted, either on foot or on horseback, a communication between the Mount and the main land, was, when the waters returned, covered by two currents that swept round the rock and met beyond it, from opposite directions. Sometimes, at spring tides, or on sudden squalls, the causeway became impassable before

the usual hour, and, in stormy weather, or on any sudden or heavy swell of the sea, it was by no means an uncommon circumstance for the Mount to be very quickly surrounded by water, and to remain as an island during many days.

To those who lived on it, or in the neighbourhood of the Bay, these things were so well known that they were always prepared for them, and never attempted to cross when there was the least sign of danger. But to strangers it would often have been hazardous, even at the regular periods, did not almost every person who visited the Mount learn from some one on the spot the state of the tide, and how it was likely to be affected by the weather, before he ventured upon crossing. We have here mentioned these particulars, as a knowledge of them will be found essential to what it now becomes our task to relate in this narrative.

It was between the hours of six and seven on that Eve of St. John of which we have

already spoken, when (a circumstance not at all unfrequent on the western coast) a very considerable change, that had been gradually coming on during the fore part of the day, took place in the weather. It blew a hard gale, and every sign in earth, sea, or sky, threatened a night that would be one of tempest; indeed, so much so, that many of the fishermen abandoned the preparations they were making for their wild sports, with their fires, and went down to the shore to secure their nets and boats; and such as dwelt on the beach cleared their cottages of the little furniture they might chance to possess in their lower stories; for, it being a spring-tide, in addition to the coming storm, they doubted not the overflowing of the waters would completely inundate the ground floors of their humble dwellings.

The Lady Alicia, who was at the house of Sampson the Jew, had arisen from her couch, and was now pacing her chamber in great distress of mind; for Miriam, who really loved

her, and to whom she had been a most generous friend, having less in her disposition of cold caution than her husband, had communicated to the lady Sampson's secret; viz. that he had detected Sir Henry de Pomeroy as the leader of the band of pilgrims who had so lately passed over to the Mount.

Though the Lady Alicia could not possibly guess that the deliverance of Adela was one (though not the chief) motive for Sir Henry's visit to St. Michael's, yet the mere fact of his being there was quite enough to render her uneasy, and she purposed to lose no time in warning the lady abbess to be on her guard, lest Sir Henry should attempt, by any violent means, to remove her charge from her cell. But, unable to cross on account of the rising gale, she had been obliged to defer her intended visit till the next day.

In the interval she sought Sampson and his wife in the apartment that opened on the

terrace, and commanded, in full view, the Mount and the bay.

The evening became every minute more and more dismal; the heavens seemed to hang heavily poised in middle air, as if about to descend in clouds and gloom upon the waters; and as this heavy mass of vapours occasionally opened, they disclosed the sun's disk, of a dull red hue, on the breast of the ocean, giving a character of sombre sublimity to the extent of sea over which it flung its departing beams, as if to render but the more distinctly visible the angry and threatening billows that came rolling in with tumultuous succession towards the shore. The winds rose no less than the waves, and with sounds so loud and dismal that, combined with the roaring of the waters, they might seem, to the ear of fancy, like a requiem for the devoted souls who, on this night, might be destined to perish by a raging ocean and an irresistible tide. The sea-mews

also gave notice of the tempest, by their clamours, as they winged their way to the crags among the rocks.

The storm visited the Mount with unmitigable fury. Its fitful gale shook with rude blasts the pictured windows of its venerable chapel, whistled shrilly through the hollow clefts of the rock, and caused the nun to cross herself in her cell, and to say a prayer to St. Michael, the protecting angel of all high places, as the ancient towers of the convent trembled, and the old doors creaked and burst open, whilst the very foundations of the rock seemed to shake to their centre with the fury of the storm.

At length, for a short space, there fell an unnatural calm. The winds paused in their wild, yet solemn anthem ; and so much did the gloom deepen during that portentous calm, that night seemed as if about to anticipate her hour, and to chase the twilight of a summer evening from the earth. But this "strange tranquillity"

was but like the pause which sometimes occurs in the headlong career of human passions ; a pause in which the physical powers appear to gather up their concentrated strength to give yet greater force to the moral tempest in its most appalling burst. Even so was it now. The darkness, which hung as a shroud about St. Michael's, was, in a moment, dispersed by a sheet of liquid fire, that, attracted, no doubt, by the height of the rock, appeared to pour down upon it the electric matter with which the clouds were surcharged, as they gathered above the crest of the lofty Mount.

Flash succeeded flash, darkness light : the howling of the winds accompanied the roaring of the ocean and the screaming of the gulls, as the giant billows rolled onward, stronger, higher, fiercer at every rush, whilst a raging tide lent both force and speed to their advance.

At this juncture, the Lady Alicia sat before the window which overlooked the terrace so often named, and commanded a view of the

Mount, and the causeway that communicated with it at low tide. Every now and then she cast her eye towards the scene without, but started from her reclining position, on hearing Sampson observe to his wife, "that those must be fool-hardy people who were attempting to make their way from the Mount across the isthmus at such a time of the tide, and through such a gathering storm."

The kind-hearted Miriam flew to the window and exclaimed in an alarmed voice, "Alas ! what is it I see ? Horsemen and horses struggling to pass the isthmus in the midst of yonder waves, and the tide pouring in like a sluice, the more violently because of the gale : they will never reach the main land alive."

"They may,—they may yet be saved," said Sampson, "if their horses are stout and good, and can swim when their footing fails, as fail it must, before they can reach the strand. What madness to attempt the ford at such a time as this !"

“O God of Abraham !” said Miriam clasping her hands together and looking upward, “do thou be with those unhappy people, even as thou wert with the children of Israel, when they fled across the Red Sea from the bondage of the Egyptians.”

“The wind is at the east,” said Sampson, “and the storm comes up against it. It is often so in a thunder-storm, on this western coast.”

“O Father of Mercy !” continued Miriam, whose charity taught her to pray for Jew or Christian in such peril, “Do thou be to these gentiles in their danger, even as a shield and buckler of defence. Do thou stretch forth thy arm of mercy over yonder angry tide, and make the strong east wind to go back at thy bidding, so that the waters may be as a wall on the right hand and on the left, to let go by thy creatures in safety, in whose nostrils thou hast breathed the breath of life. O Father of Mercy ! deface not thine own image : spare them !”

Sampson shook his head, looked sad, but said not a word of hope.

“ But what is that I see that looks so white yonder, like the wing of the sea-mew fluttering in the gale ?” said Miriam, “ that white thing I see on yonder struggling steed, behind the second horseman ? Alas ! it is a woman.—See ! —see ! her white veil now rises with the wind and floats above the surge.”

“ A woman !” exclaimed the Lady Alicia, as she started from her seat, her feelings acting as an instinct at this moment to call up her fears, for they told her that the woman, who was seen thus perilously placed behind the horseman on the struggling horse, was the Lady Adela.

How often is it seen that, in moments of extreme danger, our affections, without an effort of our judgment, without a single calculation of our reason, speak, as it were, at once the truth, and present before our view the whole extent of an apprehended evil, whilst those

who are less interested in the event, see a cause for hope which has no ground in probability. Whence is this? Surely because that very strength of affection, (that can see hope where no hope lies, so long as its own efforts can be called into play,) in cases where it can do absolutely nothing, where it can make no exertion, and is condemned to stand and look on, with an eye fixed on the peril that threatens its dearest object, sees with greater certainty than any other eye the calamity that neither human means nor human love can avert.

It was so at this crisis; for scarcely had the agonised sight of the Lady Alicia beheld the few horsemen struggling through the roaring waters of the isthmus, and one of them bearing with him, on the same steed, a figure whose white drapery floating in the wind, spoke her to be a woman, than her own heart told her the form was that of Adela: she conjectured that the horseman was Sir Henry de Pomeroy, that his errand to the Mount had

been to free her from her cell ; how little thinking that, by such an act, he would, in all probability but hasten her destruction.

To describe the agonised state of the wretched Lady Alicia at the sight, whilst she was labouring under this conviction, would be impossible. She dropt on her knees,—she clasped her hands together, and remained for some minutes absorbed in mental prayer ; only the words “ God have mercy,” escaped in audible sounds from her lips. This done, she arose and summoned, or rather endeavoured to summon, that strong spirit of resolution to her aid that might enable her to await with submission the issue of the daring attempt of those who were endeavouring to make their way through the rising waters to the main land.

But whilst she did so, not the tempest without raged more fearfully than did that within her own soul,—for there her heart smote her with the renewed pangs of an undying remorse ; and the words,—“ Thou hast found me, O mine

enemy!" that she murmured as she cast her forlorn and despairing looks towards the sea, spoke but too plainly the fatal truth; that conscience now whispered to her each guilty recollection, as at the bidding of that dread monitor, they rose like fearful spectres before her view, each armed with a fear or a doubt, to tell her the terrors which now possessed her soul were but as stern forebodings of the coming judgments of an avenging God.

The spirit that had once upheld her ungoverned passions, she felt, was about to desert her in this her hour of need; to give her up a prey to the last evil that can fall on the guilty head, the evil of despair. Sampson, who saw her distress, and, were it possible, was willing to alleviate it, said,—

“There is hope for them yet; for as long as yonder base of the cross,—the cross of stone, the sign of the Christian’s faith,—is seen above the waters, there is hope. Let its base be once covered, and I will not say but that, like

Pharoah and his host, both horsemen and horses, the Lord will overwhelm in the midst of the sea.”*

“Oh ! be the holy cross their preservation,” said the Lady Alicia. “Oh ! blessed sign ! the waves have not yet reached it ! they may be preserved by its power.”

“Not by wood or stone can man’s life be preserved,” said Miriam, “be it the sign of the faith of Jew or Gentile. The cherubim above the mercy-seat had no power to dispense mercy, though the image was holy. It was the covenant of the ark which the mercy-seat overshadowed, that could alone save. Even so, lady, put not thy trust in yonder tall cross of stone, however sacred may be the form it bears in thy sight. But rather put thy trust

* The stone cross here named, that stood on the isthmus leading to St. Michael’s Mount, was erected in the time of Edward the Confessor. It stood for centuries, a cross surrounded by the sea at high tide. It was swept away in a great storm, about ninety years ago ; the base of it still remains, and may be seen among the rocks and stones at low water.

in Him, who is not as the deaf and blind God of the idolaters. It is He who is seen, even by the raging waters, before whom they become afraid and the depths are troubled. Pray to Him to quell their fury, and may the Father of both Jew and Gentile hear thy prayer."

As Miriam spoke, the Lady Alicia stood, scarcely sensible of the import of her words. She looked white as the veil that encircled her head, her lips quivering, scarcely drawing breath; silent, and almost motionless in the awe of an expectation so dreadful, so suspended. Her eye, strained but not fixed, alternately glanced to the sign of safety, or to the advancing riders, and looked from one to the other, with the struggles of hope and fear within her heart; whilst the horsemen came on a few steps, or the waves arose and broke in sheets of foam, far above the base of the cross, or retreating in their long hollows, left bare the isthmus to its very bed. As her eye gazed on these terrible signs, not the penitent in the

hour of his parting breath, looks to the cross held out to him by the attendant priest, with more eagerness, as his only remaining trust, than did the Lady Alicia now keep her entire soul fixed on that which arose before her aching sight, as the last, last hope of Adela's safety. She looked till her head became dizzy, and feeling she was unable longer to support herself, she tottered towards a seat that was somewhat apart from the window, sank down, and covered her eyes with her hands, as if to shut out from her view a sight of too much horror.

Miriam tried to comfort her, but not with words, for well did she know there are moments when all speech is unavailing; when the mind is too much overborne to be able to comprehend even the full extent of that religious hope, which, in all extremities, is the only beacon light to be descried amidst the darkness and the terrors of the moral storm. In such moments a single ejaculation, a "God have mercy!" is all the prayer that may be required

by Him who knows our weakness, who remembers we are but dust, and can listen to the prayer of the heart, when that of the lips is mute.

The gentle sympathy of compassionate tears from the melting eye of pity, and all those little acts and words which speak a feeling heart, were not spared by Miriam towards the unhappy sufferer. But, alas ! she saw them not,—she heard them not,—every faculty of body and soul being bound up in one expectation, one hope, one fear,—could the base of the cross still be seen ?”

“No, lady, no,” exclaimed Sampson, “the sign of safety may be no longer seen. It has sunk amid the billows ; sheets of foam now cover the base of that cross that rises like the tall mast of a galley above the stormy waters, when the body of the vessel is a wreck.”

“Father of mercy ! it is still seen,” said Miriam : “see, the billows retreat, and the base of the cross comes forth again ; there is

hope still,—hope that yonder sufferers shall not die this death.”

“God be praised !” exclaimed the Lady Alicia ; “O saints of Heaven ! have mercy in this dreadful hour !”

“O lady ! hope not too soon,” said Miriam, her countenance changing, “lest thy sorrow come upon thee as did that occasioned by the death of the first-born, in the night, and in great fear. See how yonder horsemen strive and struggle, as the waves dash up against them ;—look ! one is covered ; you see nothing but a sheet of foam, like a snow heap on a rock.”

“Now he rises from it,” said Sampson ; “see how his horse breasts the waves ! he rears himself above them. Oh ! it is a terrible sight !—how the brave animal strives ! it is a noble instinct to save his rider ;—and, oh ! look, surely those nearest the rock will perish.”

“Who will perish ? Not the horseman with Adela ?” exclaimed the Lady Alicia, in a voice of terror.

“No, no,” replied Miriam, “that horseman lives and struggles still,—he approaches the cross; the sea is not yet risen above the animal’s breast;—but the creature has become unmanageable,—there is something amiss. What is it? How it seems to strive;—see, another horseman endeavours to give his assistance, but he is driven back by yonder dark and giant billow, which comes roaring between, seeking its prey.”

“And look, Miriam,” whispered Sampson, so as not to be heard by the Lady Alicia, “look, how that unhappy woman stretches abroad her arms, as if asking help from the shore; and now she raises them to Heaven. Oh! brave horseman,—noble horse,—that was a desperate plunge,—yet it is vain,—the horse is entangled, his foot must be fast in some hollow of the rocks,—horse and rider will be lost.—But again, see how the creature struggles, plunges, —that last effort has set him free; he rears on having made it.—Again he

dashes forward ;—but where is the woman ?
I see not the white garment above the waves.”

“ It floats upon them,” exclaimed Miriam ;
“ O God of Israel ! she is lost !”

“ My child ! my child !” cried Lady Alicia,
and rushing towards the windows, as she uttered these words in a tone of agony that pierced the ear, and chilled the blood, she lost all consciousness and fell forward on the ground, deprived of sense and motion.

Miriam called for assistance. Orpha, her young handmaid, hastened to give it. They raised the wretched woman from the ground, and did all that humanity or skill could suggest to restore her to life, and to administer to her such comfort as they could offer, however unavailing, in an hour of such unmitigable suffering.

Sampson had not tarried to give his assistance to the lady, for he had seen that the foremost horseman had become desperate, after the unfortunate female, who was under his charge,

had been lost among the breakers, and that he was himself saved, apparently contrary to his own will, by the determination and exertions of another rider, who had come to his aid, and who, at the risk of his own life, dragged the wretched man's horse by the bridle in safety to the shore, as a third rider followed close on their steps, and suddenly lent his assistance also to the preservation of the horseman, who made more than one effort to shake himself free from those who would persist in saving his life ; and who had, at length, so happily accomplished their purpose.

Sampson, though more cautious, and far less generous than his wife, was nevertheless a man of humanity ; and having seen what we have here related, it occurred to him that he and his people might be of service to the sufferers. Calling, therefore, three or four Jewish youths, a part of his household, about him, he left Miriam to attend on the Lady Alicia, and hastened to the beach. There he met the

newly rescued and his band in a state of dire distress, and offering to do for them all the friendly offices he could, conducted them in a wary manner to a postern door, concealed from general observation by an abutment of the rocks, which led by a long and narrow passage into his own house ; when there arrived he spared no act of kindness that the circumstances of the case might require at his hand.

CHAPTER VIII.

Oh ! could'st thou but know
With what a deep devotedness of woe
I wept thy absence—o'er and o'er again
Thinking of thee, still thee, till thought grew pain,
And memory, like a drop that, night and day,
Falls cold and ceaseless, wore my heart away.

MOORE.

WHEN the Lady Alicia de Beaumont was restored to her senses, she found herself on a couch in the room whence she had witnessed the fatal catastrophe. Miriam was weeping by her side. Sir Henry de Pomeroy stood near ; his arms folded across his breast, his air distracted, his countenance livid, every feature expressive of a despair that preyed upon his heart, and rendered life to him as a burthen, which seemed too insupportable long to be borne with “ all its woe.”

Cædmon, to whose exertions, at the imminent risk of his own life, De Pomeroy owed his preservation, stood by his side ; every now and then he looked in Sir Henry's face with an eager and inquiring eye, but did not venture to break the calm of his despair by speaking to him, in these the first moments of his distress, anything so vain as words of consolation.

The palmer, who had united his efforts to those of Cædmon to save De Pomeroy, was also present. He alone preserved his self-command. The solemnity of his manner, and the train of reflection which usually occupied his mind and characterised his countenance, could scarcely be rendered more impressive by any new event, however calamitous.

He stood erect, grave, thoughtful ; an observant witness of the distress of all around him ; yet was there something in his looks and manner that seemed to indicate he was prepared rather to call on others to give their

attention to him, than to afford his own to their sufferings at such a crisis.

The alarm, the confusion, of so sudden and so violent a shock, the unavailing grief of such moments, at first prevented all attempts at explanation. It was not, therefore, till some words of passionate sorrow, dropt by Sir Henry, met the palmer's ear, that he came forward, in a manner that surprised and almost overwhelmed with the cause of that surprise, all who were present at this most remarkable scene. The conduct of the palmer, at such a crisis, was, perhaps, without any previous design. But the occasion offered itself, and he was led on by the strong feelings within his own breast.

“Unhappy man!” he said, addressing De Pomeroy; “yet not so unhappy in that which seems to you the greatest cause for sorrow,—the loss of the unfortunate Adela. Peace be to the departed! her pure spirit has fled, like the dove upon its wing, far away from the

stormy wind and the tempest of this rude world and all its woes. Grieve not for her, but rather for yourself, and repent of that meditated act, which would have become a crime of the most deadly nature, had Heaven allowed it to succeed. Bless the Father of mercy that you were not permitted to accomplish so great a sin. I purposed to reveal to you the fatal truth ; but ere I did so, I wished to gain speech with this most wretched woman, the Lady Alicia de Beaumont. The will of Heaven, made known in the calamity of this hour, has, in some measure, changed my purpose ; and now, therefore, do I speak. Give not way to despair ; rejoice rather that by death, the wound that no time could have healed, that must have given a fatal blow to the peace of the innocent Adela, has been prevented. Weep not then for her loss ; but weep rather for your own fearful ignorance, when I tell you, that in the gentle being you lament, you have lost, not a bride, but a sister ; for

you and Adela were the offspring of one parent ; the late Lord de Pomeroy was the father to you both, and that unhappy woman was *her* guilty mother !”

The palmer pointed to the Lady Alicia as he spoke.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy stood mute ; a sense of horror, mingled with surprise, deprived him of all power of utterance ; he shuddered at the very thought of the crime he had in ignorance committed, — that of having sought his own sister for his wife. As soon as he could regain the power of speech, and could collect his scattered senses so as to be capable of inquiry, he cast a reproachful look on the Lady Alicia, as he said, “ Why did you not tell me this ? wherefore conceal from me, from Adela, a truth so fatal, when, in ignorance of our close kindred, I was, at the first, induced by Abbot Baldwin to think of my dear lost sister with other than a brother’s sacred love ! I can see it all now. It was on this

account you severed us for ever ; and by immuring her, against her will, in the cells of yonder Mount, you exposed me to the cruel alternative, to see her sacrificed to forced vows as a nun, or to attempt her deliverance. I did attempt it, and by my means has she met a watery grave ! And I live to tell it, —live to lament the sweetest sister that was ever given to a brother's love. Unhappy Adela ! her goodness and her beauty were beyond all praise. Oh, most wretched woman ! you, who have so deceived us both to misery and ruin, you have destroyed your child !”

A groan of agony burst from the bosom of the Lady Alicia as she heard these so justly merited reproaches cast upon her by Sir Henry de Pomeroy. She essayed to speak her feelings, her sorrows, her devoted love for Adela, her unavailing repentance ; but so overwhelming was the nature of her distress, she could but utter a few scarcely

connected sentences. "Oh ! could my life redeem hers, it should be given, thankfully given to restore my child !—my child, my Adela, lost—lost, and by my means ! This is too much. I could not summon resolution sufficient to degrade myself in her eyes, —in yours. I could not speak the fatal truth, but Abbot Baldwin knew all. I confessed all to him ; and it was by his advice that I devoted my unhappy child to a cell."

"The wily monk," said Sir Henry de Pomeroy ; "and he, too, has deceived me ! But who are you ?" he said, turning to the palmer,—“you, who from the first, seem to have possessed a full knowledge of these most miserable circumstances, by which the innocent have been made to suffer, whilst the guilty go free. You, who hold my father's token and accuse his fame, say who are you ?”

The Lady Alicia looked up at hearing these words so vehemently addressed to the palmer by

Sir Henry. She looked and shuddered as the recollection of the scene in the chapel of St. Magdalen crossed her mind ; but she was too deeply affected to do more than repeat, as she did with a feeling of indescribable terror, the words of Sir Henry, and “ Say, who are you ? ” burst also from her lips.

“ Do you not know me, Alicia de Beaumont ? ” said the palmer, as he threw back his hood, and, the face being no longer shrouded, she at once recognised him. A chill stole through her veins as she did so, and placing her hands before her eyes, as if to shut out a sight that was insupportable, an ejaculation of horror and surprise escaped her lips.

“ Now do you know me, Alicia de Beaumont ? ” said the palmer ; “ or have seventeen years passed in the burning plains and cities of the East, with the sorrows of a broken heart, so changed me, that, in the ruin before you, there remains no trace by which you can recognise a fond and injured husband ? ”

The Lady Alicia clasped her hands together, raised her streaming eyes, and threw herself wildly at the palmer's feet as she exclaimed, "Pardon,—oh, pardon!—forbear all reproach. In this hour of unutterable misery, crush me not to the earth,—break not the bruised and wounded reed! I can but die, and that will make all well."

The palmer raised her. "Be calm," he said, "be calm; it is for no purpose of resentment that I am here. I know thy heart is penitent, or never, unhappy woman, never would I have returned into this land, that was once the scene of my greatest happiness, the scene also of my dishonour and of thy shame."

"Could your heart but know what mine has suffered, you would relent," said Lady Alicia; "you would know the wrath of an offended God has filled to the brim my cup of misery; that the wine is red, and that I have drunk it to the dregs. My sorrows have

been fearful ; my melancholy days, my dream-haunted nights, the stings of an awakened conscience have been as those of the scorpion to my soul. Such are my sufferings, that my most cruel creditor in injury would wish, in mercy, the account were closed in death. Deep has been my sin,—long and severe my punishment. God's justice found it out ; his arrows were abroad, and here," she added, as she emphatically laid her hand on her heart, " here have they struck."

" Alas !" said Miriam, " the hand, lady, that strikes can heal. Take comfort, then ; God will not always strive with the sinner, the sufferer ; he will give rest to the sorrowful heart at the last. Egypt was justly condemned with seven-fold plagues ; the consuming fire ran along the ground,—it was swift justice, God gave it wings ; yet even for that guilty land was there at last a rest."

" But my father," said Sir Henry de Pome-roy, " what of my father ? I have yet to learn

his part in these most unhappy circumstances. Remember the token,—I must know the truth.”

“It is one that you, as his son, will blush to hear,” said the palmer. “Your father was my most trusted friend; we were to have gone as brothers-in-arms, to the Holy Land together: when, such is the false heart of man, on my being directed by the prince I served, to leave England on the sudden, ere your father could be prepared to go with me—how shall I speak what followed!—Oh! summer friendship of my most false and flattering friend!—no sooner was I gone than he sought my wife—my wife, she who lived at Wilsworthy, like a widow in her weeds, in the decency of an honest sorrow for her absent lord; but thy father found her fair and frail. He made excuses for not following me so speedily as I expected to the Holy Land; and by a thousand arts, that men who look like angels, but whose tongues are baited with deceptions, know how to practise, won the ear of my unguarded wife; stole into her

easy faith, gained her credulous affection, and having found her as a flower, in the unsullied beauty of her innocence, never ceased his wicked wiles till he had rifled its chaste sweets, and threw it as a worthless weed away. Adela, the lost Adela, was the fruit of their debased love."

"But she was innocent,—she never knew the wretched secret of her birth," said Sir Henry; "she has passed out of life ignorant, even as she was innocent of all blame. I will not, then, lament her,—but, oh that I had died with her! I should have been spared this hour."

The Lady Alicia, whilst the palmer made Sir Henry acquainted with these fearful circumstances, sat in speechless agony, hearing, yet scarcely seeming to comprehend all he said, so wild, so agitated were her looks and her demeanour.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy at length inquired how it was that the unhappy Adela had been

passed on the world as the daughter and heiress of the late Lord de Marmoutier, the brother of the Lady Alicia de Beaumont. The palmer made no reply, but turned to her, and looked as if he commanded an answer from herself. She paused to collect her scattered senses, and then said, "Guilty, but not hardened in guilt, on hearing a report, the truth of which no one doubted, that my husband had died in the Holy Land, I fled into Normandy, ere Adela was born,—my soul torn by remorse, for now too late did I know the worth of the husband whose fond trust I had so abused, and the worthlessness of him for whose sake I had so erred. Adela was born in secret; a Jewess, whose life, with that of her husband, I had formerly saved, by a timely intercession with my brother, who, for some offence had condemned them both to die, — that Jewess, the kind Miriam, attended me in the hour of my distress, took from me the infant Adela, and nurtured her in obscurity, but with the

fondest care. At length, my brother dying, he left me in charge of his orphan daughter; she was not many months older than my own child. I determined to return with my infant niece into England, as I had paid the fine to the king in purchase of the guardianship to my brother's orphan heiress. She was a tender blossom, and soon blighted; she died of an infantine fever on our way through Normandy to the coast. Tempted by the opportunity, I concerted measures with Miriam and her husband to conceal from the world at large the death of my brother's child, and to cause my own to be substituted in her place, and to bear her name; for hitherto I had seen my daughter but in stolen interviews, and dared not call her mine. Our immediate removal to England favoured the plan; no one suspected the truth; and my devoted affection to Adela appeared in the eyes of all men a natural and a generous love for my orphan ward, the child of my deceased brother. Adela herself knew

me but as such, and never suspected how much dearer she was to this heart than the offspring of another could ever be to it. Only one other individual, excepting Miriam and her husband, knew the fatal truth ; that other was an aged man, a brother of the order of St. Francis, to whom circumstances compelled me to reveal my wretched story on the death of my brother's child, and the substitution of my own. I paid largely to his convent and its charities to secure his secrecy. He promised to be faithful ; but, though he wished to serve me, I have some cause for suspecting my secret became too heavy a burthen for a tender conscience ; for, some time after, he very suddenly left England, fled to the Holy Land, and was heard of no more. In all probability he died in Syria."

"No," said the palmer, "that poor but faithful servant of the church did not die there. After the lapse of some months, he received from a brother of his order, on his

return from the Holy Land, some information which led him to conclude I was not really dead. With this prepossession acting on a mind already alarmed by the reproaches of conscience, for being the keeper of a secret in which there was so much of falsehood and of guilt, he sought me over land and seas, and at length found me. From him I learnt the dreadful truth ; and that Adela, whom I supposed to be only the niece and ward of my wife, (her brother having died in Normandy some time after I had quitted England,) was her own daughter,—the offspring of her guilty love, by her base paramour, the Baron de Pomeroy, my most treacherous friend. On hearing this, related with such evidence of facts that rendered doubt impossible, in the bitterness of my soul I vowed vengeance on the despoiler of my honour and my peace ; and that, should my vengeance be accomplished, I would dedicate the remainder of my days to the service of the Red Cross in the East ;

and, till that service should become ineffectual, I would never more revisit England, — the scene of my happiness, of my misery. I also vowed that, whenever I did so revisit my native land, it should be as a palmer under penance, in deep humility, and that I would never, even under circumstances of the strongest temptation, reveal my name, my rank, or my sorrows, till I had first accomplished a pilgrimage to the most holy places of the West, and had made my prayers and my offerings at the Mount of St. Michael on the Eve of St. John, that being the day on which I bade the last farewell to my wife, whilst she was yet innocent of falsehood and of guilt.”

“I can now most fully comprehend all that has hitherto appeared so mysterious,” said Sir Henry. “It was, then, by your hand that my father fell in the East, and to you he lost his honour’s pledge?”

“He did,” said the palmer: “I accused him of his guilt; he endeavoured to defend

it, as far as a cause so bad would admit defence. He denied having used any arts such as I had charged him with using,—the arts of the hag and the magician,—as the means of my wife's seduction. He pledged his token, the silver spur, that he would maintain with his sword the honour of his name. We met ; the sense of my injuries gave strength to my arm and firmness to my spirit, whilst with the Lord de Pomeroy it was otherwise ; brave as he was, yet when called forth in so unjust a quarrel, his hand was unnerved, it made a coward of his heart,—he fell at the first blow. Here is his token. It is yours, Sir Henry, would you desire to redeem it by the way of arms ; John de Beaumont, for such is my name, will not deny you a fair field to regain it, if you think the ancient token of your house, a house once honourable in all its branches, should be redeemed by you."

"Never," said De Pomeroy, "never ! my sword would drop from my hand, could I think

to raise it against a man so injured as thyself. My father's sins have long since been called to an account before the bar of heaven. His fair fame I would have defended with the last drop of my blood ; but I will not draw a sword in support of his dishonour : I can but blush for the cause. Farewell my Lord de Beaumont ; I must hence. After what has this day happened at the Mount, I must not tarry near it. I owe a duty to the dead. When the storm has ceased, and the tide is low, some whom I will leave here for the purpose, must seek for the body of my unhappy sister. If it is washed on shore, it shall be interred within consecrated ground. Mass and requiem shall be sung for the repose of her soul throughout all the convents of the West : whilst her monument—she has a living one in my bosom.”

As he spoke the tears long suppressed rushed into his eyes, and so completely was he overcome by a sense of sorrow for her loss, that, unwilling those who were present should wit-

ness his deep distress, he hastily left the apartment. In a state of mind bordering on frenzy, from the complicated nature of his feelings, he gave directions to some of his people to cause a strict search to be made for the body of Adela, mounted his horse and rode off, attended only by Cædmon, and two or three men-at-arms.

After his departure, the palmer turned to the Lady Alicia, who was endeavouring to support her head on the bosom of her faithful Miriam.

“Unhappy woman,” he said, “ere I bid you for ever farewell, receive from the husband you have so deeply injured, his pardon of all injury: nay, more, his pity for what has this day chanced to wring your soul with agony. O Alicia! though I am a broken-hearted man, for whom the world contains not a thing, in all its wearying round, to pleasure him, yet, even now, I cannot look upon you without emotions that shake and unman my foolish

breast. Alicia, how I loved you ! The slightest accents of endearment from thy lips, were to me as the sweetest music ; whilst to receive a mark of affection from thy hand, a look that spake it from thy eye, was welcome to my soul as the sound of the fountains of the desert is to the thirsty pilgrim on his way. What happiness did I lose, in losing thee ! But I will not now look back upon the past. The blow that was struck at my peace came from an unsuspected hand. I am its victim ; and here I stand the ruin of myself,—like a tree that has been struck by the sudden lightning, blighting with one stroke its proud crest.”

The palmer paused a moment ; looked sorrowfully upon the afflicted lady, and thus continued, in a voice and manner that were no less affectionate than solemn :—

“ Farewell, Alicia, farewell ! my purpose is accomplished ; receive my last forgiveness. Retire into some religious house. Give thy wealth to the church and to the poor,—thyself

to God. Seek by tears of penitence to wash out thine offences ; and may peace and blessing be yours. My vows compel me to visit again the Holy Land, as there is a prospect of a renewed attempt for the deliverance of the holy sepulchre from infidel hands : thither do I go, and thence I shall never more return. Farewell, then, my most beloved Alicia, for ever farewell !”

He clasped the wretched penitent to his bosom, as she bade him a last and distracted adieu ; and no sooner was he gone than she sank into such a state of suffering and distress, that those who were about her believed that night would be her last. She lived, however, to fall into so high a fever it was impossible she could be removed from the house of the Jew, and there she continued during several weeks.

Miriam attended upon her Christian benefactress with the utmost care throughout her illness, and whilst she hung between life and

death, often revolved in her own mind the agitating events of the Eve of St. John, and the wretched fate of the guilty, sorrowing, and bereaved Lady Alicia, bereaved both as a wife and as a mother. And often did she say to her spouse, Sampson, that, notwithstanding the persecutions to which, as Jews, they were so constantly exposed, not to gain the whole world would she exchange situations with her benefactress; who she considered to have been as signally punished for her crime, as was Queen Bathsheba by the death of the child, the offspring of David, whilst she was yet the wife of Uriah the Hittite.

On the morning after her death the body of the unfortunate Adela was washed on shore; and being speedily discovered by the followers of Sir Henry de Pomeroy, it was removed with every mark of respect to the convent of the Cistercian nuns, near Tregony, in Cornwall; of which town Sir Henry held the lordship. As he had directed, information of what had hap-

pened was instantly conveyed to him. He was not far off, having fled on the previous night to his manor of Tregony. In a short time he arrived at the convent.

Contrary to all expectation, Sir Henry refused to look on the corpse of his beloved and most unfortunate sister; assigning as his reason for such refusal, that he wished not to have the memory of her, as he had so lately seen her, in life and beauty, effaced from his mind. Nothing had as yet disturbed that recollection, and not for worlds would he lose, in its fairest view, the image of one so lovely, so gentle, and so good. He desired to think of her only as an angel of light; nor would he have a recollection of decay and death to mingle itself with the bright vision of his imagination,—one that was the dearest and most consolatory to the feelings of his heart.

Sir Henry prepared to attend the funeral, ere he departed from Tregony, with much caution, as his sudden capture and brief possession of

St. Michael's Mount on the Eve of St. John, for the Earl of Mortaigne, had drawn upon him the attention of all the friends and officials in the interests of King Richard throughout Cornwall. Justly, therefore, fearing some sudden assault, and even an arrest, for his bold and rebellious deed, Sir Henry armed both himself and followers; so that the obsequies of the Lady Adela, performed within the chapel of a peaceable sisterhood of nuns, were more like those of a feudal baron in a time of civil strife, than the last rites paid to virgin innocence and beauty untimely consigned to the tomb: for Sir Henry attended, as chief mourner, armed to the teeth, with helmet and mail, shield and sword; supported by a stout band of yeomen and archers, equally prepared to stand by his defence. But no disturbance was offered, and the remains of the unfortunate Adela were consigned to their mother earth, amid the masses and requiems of the church, the tears of the nuns, and the manly

sorrow of those who could look on death in a field of arms, as a sight of exultation, when in the enthusiasm of victory, they proclaimed the day to be their own; but who could not see it in the lovely and the young, so early cut off, without those vain regrets and awakened sympathies, that turned their customary sternness into a sorrow no less honourable to themselves, than to the dead whom they deplored.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy, after the ceremonies were ended, was observed to cast one long and last look upon the grave, where the remains of his sister were deposited in death's narrow house. He looked intently; his heart spoke in his eyes: that heart was big with sorrow; but not a word was spoken, he had no power to give utterance to his feelings. Slowly and silently he withdrew from the chapel; mounted a horse that stood ready for him without; went forward, attended only by Cædmon and a few of his most trusted fol-

lowers, took some obscure road, and, excepting by those who were admitted to his confidence, he was heard of no more for several weeks. At length, without any previous notice being given to the châtelain, or to his people, he suddenly appeared before the gates of his castle of Berry Pomeroy in Devon, and there he took up his abode: but of this, and other matters of import, we must speak in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

He woke to watch the lamp, and tell,
From hour to hour, the castle bell,
Or listen to the owlet's cry,
Or the sad breeze that whistles by,
Or catch by fits the tuneful rhyme,
With which the warder cheats the time,
And envying, think, how, when the sun
Bids the poor soldier's watch be done,
Couched on his straw, and fancy free,
He sleeps like careless infancy.

SCOTT.

TWELVE months had passed away, and had brought with them their usual vicissitudes, their burthen of weal and woe, to the several personages of our history, and much of change also to this realm of England, ere we once more resume the thread of our narrative, in its most remarkable events.

Richard, in the interval, had returned from

his captivity, once more to resume the sceptre of regal power, which his wily and treacherous brother, John Earl of Mortaigne, had so industriously laboured to wrest from him during his imprisonment and misfortunes.

The return of the heroic Richard was at a moment the most favourable for his own safety, and that of the kingdom at large. It reanimated the party who had been true and faithful to him; it confirmed and fixed in their allegiance the doubtful and the wavering; it struck a panic into the hearts of the seditious; put to flight many of his most treacherous foes, cooled the enterprises of others, and finally, so completely broke the party of the rebel prince, that John, seeing his cause was hopeless, hastened to throw himself at his brother's feet, to beg his forgiveness for the past, to offer his allegiance for the future; and, as a proof of his sincerity, hesitated not to betray, and to give up to the king's wrath, some of those very adherents who had put themselves

within the power of this despicable prince, by having espoused his rebellious cause.

At this juncture, several of the principal barons who had contributed their support to the late insurrections during the captivity of Richard, no sooner heard of his return to his kingdom, and that he was welcomed by all classes of men, than desirous to secure their own safety, yet doubting the royal pardon, they hastened to shelter themselves among their followers and vassals, within the strong walls of their feudal castles; where they designed to await the result of those measures the king might be disposed to take with them, before they decided on a renewed fealty, or an open resistance that should have for its object the preservation of their lives.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy, whose avowed, active, and most zealous support of the Earl of Mortaigne, is so well known to the reader, was one of those who, on the earliest intimation of Richard's return, and John's treachery to his

partisans, had so retreated to his castle of Berry Pomeroy, situated about three miles from Totness in Devonshire. Had not the cause we have named existed to compel him to fly to this retreat, he would, in all probability, have sought it; for so deep was his sense of the calamitous circumstances we have recorded in the last chapter, that the melancholy and solitude which seemed to be natural to its walls, harmonised entirely with the feelings he indulged for his own overwhelming afflictions.

At the period of which we now speak the castle of Berry Pomeroy was a noble pile; strong, massive, and imposing in its character and construction. It had been erected by Ralph de Pomeroy, who passed over into England in the warlike train of the invading William, and who was one among the most distinguished warriors in the memorable field of Hastings. The Conqueror rewarded the services of this powerful baron, by giving him no less than fifty-eight lordships; amongst these

were the manors of Tregony in Cornwall, and Berry in Devon : on the latter he built one of the very strongest and most stately castles of the West ; and thenceforth took the name of Berry Pomeroy.

The castle so erected was situated on the top of a lofty rock ; it arose abruptly from the east, and, in part, overhung a small stream called the Hemms. On this side, the castle walls towered above a terrace that lay along the level space, and close to the verge of the declivity.

This terrace commanded a fine view of the heights, woods, and hills on the opposite side the valley, and looked down on the small stream we have just named, that ran brawling over masses of rock and stone at the base of this eastern and inaccessible precipice.

The south front of the castle, saving it had not the advantage of being seen on the summit of a rocky height, was, in itself, no less striking. Its towers and walls were strongly battlemented. Towards the western end stood the

gateway, guarded by its stout and warlike towers, on either side. The entrance was doubly portcullised, and over its vaulted archway was the guard-room, or first ward.

The castle, even at this early period, stood embosomed in woods ; altogether, its profound silence, its solitude, and gloom seemed to the eye of a stranger more suited to the contemplative spirit of the monks, than to the fierce, stirring, and warlike character of those who were now the inhabitants of its walls.

Its deep retirement, however, its lonely shades, and vast and melancholy halls, as we have already observed, suited well with the present feelings of its unfortunate possessor, the young Lord of Berry Pomeroy ; who, at the time we opened this chapter, lived within the ancient dwelling of his forefathers, more like a wayfarer, who had there taken up his temporary abode as a shelter from the wind and storm from without, than as the rightful and assured master of so powerful a castle.

Though Sir Henry never mentioned the name of Adela, yet in many things, some even the most trifling, he showed how strong, how tender were the recollections he cherished within his breast, of his unhappy sister. This was most apparent, when, even in the midst of his own anxious concerns, remembering how fondly she had been attached to her faithful bower-maiden, Grace Bolt, he caused her to be sought after, and brought to his castle. Grace was easily discovered; for she had quitted the convent the day after her young mistress had been so violently removed from it to meet her most untimely and disastrous fate. Once more did she, for a few months, re-enter the household of the Lady Alicia at Wilsworthy. But she soon quitted it, and returned home again to her father at the mills; till, fearing a new persecution on the part of the still amorous and disconsolate Sir Simon, she was easily prevailed with to leave them, and to accept the respectable office of under housekeeper, or, as

it was called, mistress of the spices and the napery at Berry Pomeroy Castle. This mention of the miller's maid will prepare our readers for meeting her once more, as it is with her we have now somewhat to do.

In a small room, whose narrow confines received its sole illumination from a little latticed window in the ground floor of one of the massive Norman towers that looked into the court-yard of the castle, sat Grace Bolt. She was dressed, not altogether so dismally as when she was an unwilling inhabitant within the cells of St. Michael, nor yet so gaily as when she came forth from her father's mill to dance round the May-pole, on the green of her native town, on a bright May-day. Her countenance was thinner, less round, and far less cheerful than formerly; when her sprightliness and bloom had so completely caught the heart and bewildered the shallow wits of the luckless Sir Simon, the curate. But now, with a mouth that smiled as the lips spoke, and an eye that

would have kept company with that smile, had not a tear forced its way to contradict it, did Grace bid welcome to her old acquaintance and play-fellow, Patch, the fool, who had come in the train of a newly arrived guest to Berry Pomeroy Castle. Grace made him very welcome, seated him in the little dark nook she was, by her office in the household, licensed to call her own apartment, and set before him a good jug of stout ale, flanked by some cold viands of a quality and sufficiency to do credit to the hospitality of the castle.

Patch seemed altered, too, for he neither looked so merry, nor was so merry, as he used to be in times past. He still wore his motley, his guarded coat, and his cap and bells, but he did not jingle them as he had been wont to do, on arriving at this or any other honourable dwelling ; for though a fool by profession, he seemed perfectly to understand that folly suits not well with those whose hearts have

become less light, and whose heads have grown more thoughtful.

Patch and Grace had not met for many a long day; it was, therefore, with a better feeling than mere idle curiosity, that they now inquired of each other what might have been their several fortunes since they last parted; and how it happened that each had passed into the service of a new master.

To Grace's inquiry, Patch readily replied, and as his communication will be found one of more than ordinary interest to the readers of our narrative, we shall give it at full, with all the little circumstances detailed by the narrator.

"Surely you must, or ought to know, Grace," said her old gossiping friend, "for the matter is both simple and natural, that Wilsworthy has a new master now; though, as I may say, an old one,—yet not an old one neither, in one sense of the word; and so I,

who am one of the living properties of the estate, which might be very logically proved, as much as either dog, calf, or sheep, on the domain, so I have passed, with the live stock of Wilsworthy, into the service of a new master; if you, my old acquaintance, can but comprehend how all this may be."

"I can comprehend," replied Grace, "that I, who am young in years, have yet been known long enough by thee, Master Patch, to be called old acquaintance; but I cannot comprehend how thy new master can be at once a young and an old man?"

"Why thus," said Patch. "Cædmon, the Saxon thane, is now master of Wilsworthy; inasmuch as he hath succeeded the late possessor, the Lady Alicia de Beaumont, and he is now my master. And she was as much; for though she was my mistress as a woman, yet was she my master, as having the lordship over me and all her vassals. And as Cædmon was, by his progenitorship by his old Saxon

grandfather, and by his own father, the natural heir and Lord of Wilsworthy, he may with great truth be called, though a young man, an old master ; and hither is he come to-day, to visit Sir Henry in his own castle of Berry Pomeroy."

"Well," said Grace, "I am glad of it ; for Cædmon the Saxon was ever a handsome and a kindly youth. But how he should come to take possession of his own, as I may call it, seems to me very wonderful ; because, as I have heard tell, he being a Saxon, could not inherit anything, if the king had set his face against it."

"Ay, but the king did not set his face against it," said Patch. "God bless our fighting king, he would rather humble the heads of Saracens than Christians, even though they do stand on Saxon shoulders."

"Prithee, then," said Grace, "do tell me how it all chanced, for to me it is a riddle past finding out."

“Why, thus it happened,” said Patch : “King Richard, on his return, had Cædmon up before the council, with the others whom the sheriff of Cornwall laid hold upon, for being concerned in that affair of the seizing of St. Michael’s Mount for Prince John. Cædmon declared, and some papers found upon him proved he spoke the truth, that he had joined in that affair, from no wish to aid in the work of treason, but for the sole purpose of assisting in the deliverance of the Lady Adela, who, against her will, had been carried into the cells of the convent in the old Mount, with the intention to compel her to take the veil.”

“I doubt not he spoke the truth to the king,” said Grace ; “alas ! for the poor Lady Adela !”

“Great rewards were offered to Cædmon by the council,” continued Patch ; “and the king himself offered to become his friend, would he but give information as to the part Sir Henry

de Pomeroy had taken in seizing the Mount for Prince John,—his plans, his measures, his partisans. But it was all in vain; nothing could prevail with Cædmon to become a betrayer of his friend: and so nobly did he bear himself before the king and council, that Richard, ever chivalrous, and loving to play the magnanimous knight more than the avenging king, struck by the poor Saxon youth's bold denial to play the part of a traitor to his friend, asked him what terms he would accept, and what he would do to serve the state, should he, Richard, give him liberty, and confer on him a benefit. 'I would, royal Richard,' replied the Saxon youth, 'draw my sword for you to the death in any just cause, consistent with what I owe to my own honour and my father's memory; but not to save the spark of life that binds to this world the enthralled spirit of Cædmon, would I do that which I might deem unworthy—unworthy one who, by his

birth, however adverse are his fortunes, stands before you a Saxon thane !' — 'Cædmon,' said the king, 'live a Saxon thane ; thou art too noble to be an enemy to Richard, who asks no assurance of thy fealty but that which is found in thy honourable breast.'

"That was kindly said by the king," observed Grace.

"But hear what followed," continued Patch :
" 'Cædmon,' said Richard, 'it is not yet known to you, though it is to us, (the family of De Beaumont being extinct by the death, as we learn, of all of that race,) to us, who, in the right of the crown, are become heir to the castle and domain of Wilsworthy,—it is not yet known to you that the Lady Alicia, not long before she retired from the world, addressed to us a letter ; she wrote it on hearing of her husband's death, whilst he was on his return to the East. In the full penitence of a contrite heart did she write to us, renounced all her worldly possessions, and having given much

of her wealth to the church, prayed that we would forego our rightful claim as sovereign to the Castle of Wilsworthy, and would bestow it on Cædmon, a Saxon youth of noble mind and manners, the grandson of Oswy, once its natural lord, who had forfeited his inheritance with his life, in a contest in which her late husband, the Lord de Beaumont, was the victor. We were disposed to grant her prayer in thy behalf; but when we learned that thou wast one with Sir Henry de Pomeroy in the attempt to seize the Mount for our late rebel, but now our dear and repentant brother, John, we paused ere we decided on putting into thy hands a castle so strong as that of Wilsworthy.’ ”

“ And what said Cædmon to this ? ” inquired Grace : “ this was wise.”

“ Be patient,” replied Patch. “ Hear out the matter, and then comment on the manner of it. ‘ Nevertheless,’ said the king, ‘ we would not determine to condemn thee unheard,

as a common traitor. We sent for thee, therefore, Cædmon, to prove thee. Hadst thou been false to thy friend,—hadst thou betrayed him to us either from fear or for reward, Richard of England would never have put confidence in a betrayer. Never would he have bidden thee, as he now does, henceforth to hold thy father's lands as a true subject to thy king, as constable and thane of Wilsworthy.' ”

“ It was nobly done,” said Grace. “ And so this was the end of King Richard's sending for you and Cædmon to the council ? ”

“ The king did not send for me, Grace,” replied Patch ; “ his Highness has no need to seek beyond the court for fools or knaves, at any time ; and I did not then belong to Cædmon. The king sent only for the Saxon youth, that he might put his truth and courage to the test, as I have said. But you are impatient ; if you would but hear me tell out my tale ! for I have got the king's speech to my young master by heart, quite as well as the minstrels,

who are already turning the whole story into ballads and songs ; and it is worth the telling, if you would but hear it to an end."

"I could hear it all day," said Grace, "with true pleasure ; for it's just like the stories the minstrels tell round a winter fire, blazing with the yule logs. But is it all true?"

"Quite true," replied Patch ; "and here is the principal person of it,—that is, next to the king,—at this present time under this very roof, come to visit Sir Henry de Pomeroy."

"Do you know the particulars of the Lord de Beaumont's death?" said Grace.

"Why, thus," replied Patch : "it was soon noised abroad that my Lord de Beaumont, after an absence of seventeen years, during which time he was believed to be dead, had returned to England as a palmer, bound by the most rigid penitential vows, and that he had vowed never to reveal his name or lineage, till he should have completed his pilgrimages at the Mount of St. Michael on the Eve of

St. John. That he did so,—that he saw his wife, who, it seems, had been false to him, many years ago, with the old Lord of Berry Pomeroy, and having bestowed on his lady his forgiveness, he quitted, and for ever, both her and his native land, with the intention to return and end his days in the service of the cross, in Palestine. But that purpose was not permitted to take effect ; for, worn in body and mind, and having laboured in his long and severe pilgrimages far beyond his strength, he landed, but so ill, at Jaffa, that he soon after died, declaring he left no heir. He gave much of his possessions to the church, but Wiilsworthy he wished, might, with the consent of the king, be given to Cædmon, the grandson of that Oswy whom he had slain in battle, and by whose death he had for so many years possessed the lands. It is now said, that before my Lord de Beaumont died, he wrote to his lady, praying her to keep the matter secret ; but, if ever Richard should return to this kingdom, whilst she was yet

alive, that she would intercede with his highness in behalf of Cædmon. But you, Grace, ought to know much more than I can tell of this matter, seeing that you were with the Lady Alicia when she died."

"I was so," said Grace; "for, after that dreadful Eve of St. John, that I shall never think upon without breaking my heart,—after that sad night, when the poor dear Lady Adela was drowned, I could not bear St. Michael's Mount; for I thought I saw nothing but my poor lady floating on every wave that broke against its rocks, and did nothing but hear her cries in every wind that blew. I could not bear my life in that dismal old convent, and so I was glad to get away; and the abbess, who never could abide me, and called me pert jade, let me go freely enough."

"And did you return then to the Lady Alicia, whilst she was at Market Jew?" inquired Patch.

"Oh! no," said Grace; "the Lady Alicia,

whilst she tarried there, was in the house of one Sampson, a Jew ; and I did not think it proper for a young Christian woman, as I am, Master Patch, to go to such a place ; and so I did not go to my Lady Alicia, till she returned again to Wilsworthy ; and she was long sick of a raging fever at the Jew's."

"And when she got over it," said Patch, "it was only to die elsewhere."

"But she did not die for some months, however," said Grace. "She talked of going to end her days as a nun at St. Clare's in Cornwall ; but she was too weak to move from her own castle, when she had once more returned to it ; and then letters came to her from overseas, most likely those from her dying lord, but who they came from no one knew but her chaplain ; and though she was very sad, and wept much, yet she could scarcely be more sad than she was before ; but soon after she took to her chamber, and thought she should never more hold up her head."

“And then it was, I suppose,” said Patch, “she settled her worldly affairs, and wrote that letter which was afterwards delivered to the king, in favour of the noble Cædmon.”

“It might have been so,” replied Grace; “but I knew nothing of that matter. She gave great sums to the priests for masses to be said for the repose of the soul of the Lady Adela, and of her Lord’s soul too; and then we all knew, for the first time, that she had learnt he had died in the East. She endowed with rich gifts many a religious house; gave great alms to the poor, and did not forget her household, who had so faithfully served her. All this was right and well; but no sooner was it done, than she seemed all at once lost.”

“Because she had no more business to occupy her thoughts with,” said Patch.

“Oh, but she had, and such business as none may slight,” answered Grace with a sigh, “for she had her peace to make with God; and that was no easy matter, because her con-

science was unquiet. She called in priests and holy men, and they shrived her, and did their best. But it was hard work with them, for her mind was bent on the past ; she seemed to see nothing but what was gone by ; and that only in things which made her wretched, that would not away from her thoughts."

"And did she die with so little comfort?" inquired Patch.

"She died of a broken heart," said Grace, "if ever woman did in this world. For at whiles, when she was feverish and weak, her head would so wander, and she would talk about her child and the sea, and would bid us look out at the window, when the wind blew, and see if it were half tide yet, and if the base of a cross could yet be seen above the waves ; and then she would scream, and say a billow had covered it ; and then she would wander again, and say that it was her husband who was struggling with the late Lord of Berry

Pomeroy in the water, and that the waves changed their colour, and became blood."

"Conscience, Grace," said Patch, shaking his head,—“it was conscience would not let her rest. Well, Grace, to my mind, none so much deserve my cap and bells, as those who are fools to their own quiet, and by wanting wisdom to respect what their conscience tells them, make an unquiet house within, which is the worst of all divided realms.”

“You talk like a priest, I declare, Master Patch, since you have lived with Cædmon, the Saxon thane. See what comes of having a master who can read, write, and talk Latin. My Lady Alicia could do all those things, for she was, early in life, intended for an abbess. But I could only talk to her in plain English; and so, when she would sigh, and come to herself, and talk about her sins, I, to quiet her, bade her not to trouble her head about such matters, but to leave them to God, and to try

to think only of Father Hilary, who did all he could to comfort her."

"He was her confessor," said Patch, "and a worthy man. And pity it were he could not have said something to make her die more happily."

"Oh, he did at the last," said Grace; "she made a pious, and, as I may say, an exemplary ending; for finding how anxious she was to die a nun, on her giving a hundred gold byzants to the convent of St. Clare, the prioress sent her a nun's gown and veil, and Father Hilary put it on her, and caused her to be taken out of bed and carried to the chapel, and laid down before the altar; and she died as they were sprinkling her all over with ashes, and singing the *Nunc Dimittis*."

"Well, peace be to her memory," said Patch. "Let us now talk of the living, and of some little matter of my own that I have long wished to say to thee, Grace, but have had no opportunity till now, to say it. I have something

to ask of thee, my damsel, that thou wilt not deny, I hope, to thy old play-fellow, Patch ; and truly, those sweet lips look as if they were not formed for denial ; and so here is my supplication, made by as true a heart as ever loved maiden——”

Patch’s petition need not be told ; and, as Grace, with a little blushing, and a little air of consequence intermixed, that very night informed the housekeeper, who was her superior in the household, that she must very shortly leave the castle, as she had thoughts of changing her condition, our readers may infer that Patch, who had long cast a loving eye on the miller’s maid, had not made his petition to her absolutely in vain.

CHAPTER X.

What equall torment to the grieve of minde,
And pyning anguish hid in gentle heart,
That inly feeds itselfe with thoughts unkind,
And nourisheth her owne consuming smart ?
What medicine can any leache's art
Yeeld such a sore, that doth her grievance hide,
And will to none her maladie impart.

SPENSER.

CÆDMON, on his arrival at Berry Pomeroy, found Sir Henry sunk into the most profound melancholy. He made no complaint of any kind ; he scarcely alluded to the past, appeared to have no interest in the future, and hardly seemed to be conscious of the present. He was more as a man who broods over the recollection of past passions, than as one who cherishes any that could disturb his peace

anew. So frequent were his fits of abstraction, of silence, and of a solitude that liked to shroud itself in mystery, (for Sir Henry hated to have it known in what particular spot of his deep and intricate woods he passed so many hours alone,) that it was merely by a word, now and then spoken, he at all alluded to the manner in which he spent his time since his peculiar misfortunes. Yet was it evident to Cædmon, that the recollection of the horrible fate of the Lady Adela, in consequence of De Pomeroy's guilty, yet, in one sense, most innocent affection, (for he had never known nor suspected their nearness of kindred till she was dead,) was ever present to a mind which had so long brooded over its own misery, it had lost the power to shake it off.

On one occasion, however, the unhappy man mentioned his sister's name ; it was when he gave some directions for the completion of a monumental effigy that he designed to place

on her tomb, over the spot wherein she was interred, at Tregony in Cornwall.

“Had my dear sister been spared to me,” he said to Cædmon, “I should have found a gentle creature to love me, to care for me, in every stage of my being. She would have recognised the brother of her affections under any change; she would have looked on me with sympathy, even as I am now, broken in spirit, worn with suffering; she would have been my friend in life, my solace in death. But she is gone. I will not sorrow for her, she is an angel of light; but rather for myself, who am left alone in a world where I have no consolation, wanting her.”

Cædmon, deeply affected by this burst of feeling, the only approach to any strong emotion Sir Henry had evinced since he had been his guest, now endeavoured, in the kindest manner, to soothe his melancholy. There was a manly tenderness in the Saxon youth, as he did so, that was truly amiable; and, after

suggesting all those themes of comfort, of consolation, that feeling, friendship, or religion could supply, Cædmon, at length, ventured to advise Sir Henry to quit his present solitary way of life, and to come to him at his more cheerful Castle of Wilsworthy: there might, he fancied, be a soothing influence in a place so consecrated to his affections by the recollections with which it was combined.

De Pomeroy shook his head, and replied,

“No, not there; not at Wilsworthy.”

“Where you will, then,” said Cædmon, “so as you leave this place; for here you must not stay. Though you are in one of the strongest castles of the West, yet are you careless of its defence. The watch-towers are often unmanned; on the battlements no guard is kept in the night; the gates are frequently left unlocked, till after sundown; and, from your own neglect of your safety, your followers have adopted the idea that you are perfectly secure, and that you have received an assur-

ance of it. You seem to me to live in a manner, as if you were careless of what might become of you, of what might be the result of the king's decision in council respecting those barons, of whom you are one, who have openly rebelled against him, in favour of his brother, the Earl of Mortaigne. The result of the king's judgment is still doubtful. Till, therefore, something is decided, either adopt a necessary precaution to enable you to keep on the defensive within your own castle, or pass over into Normandy, where you have possessions, and tarry there, till these storms shall be overblown, when, you and the princely Richard being reconciled, you may return hither, in the most perfect safety. In the interval, leave me to intercede with the king to pronounce your pardon."

To this wise counsel De Pomeroy turned a deaf ear. In vain was it that Cædmon set before him the treachery of Prince John to all who had been his partisans in the late

unhappy attempts at rebellion. Cædmon urged this, in order to prove to his friend that no reliance should be placed on the generosity, gratitude, or forbearance of the Earl of Mortaigne.

As a confirmation of his arguments, he instanced Abbot Baldwin. That wily monk had for some time found great success attend his plans ; indeed, he had seemed to be on the eve of accomplishing all his purposes. He had so far gained the encouragement of the pope, in his appeal to Rome, that he was in full expectation of receiving a bull from his holiness, that should end all his quarrels with the Bishop of Exeter, by constituting the Abbey of Tavistock altogether as exempt from episcopal jurisdiction, and subject only to the see of Rome.

But the pope, who had, in secret, aided the machinations of the Earl of Mortaigne, whilst Richard was in prison, no sooner found that the lion-hearted monarch was once more returned in safety to wield the sceptre of Eng-

land, all the aims of Richard's enemies being completely frustrated, than, without a pause, he gave up the sinking cause of Prince John, and, in the most zealous manner, renewed his friendship with the gallant king : and, in order to make his court to him more effectual, sacrificed, as one of his first moves towards a change of party, Abbot Baldwin, as a man who had been in league with the Earl of Mortaigne, against that very dear son of the church, Richard, king of England.

It is almost needless to add, that his holiness, in consequence of this, withdrew his countenance, from the appeal made to Rome, and left Tavistock Abbey still under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Exeter ; and its ambitious and subtle abbot to break his heart in the bitterness of a proud, wounded, and disappointed spirit, burning with vain and fruitless desires for revenge.

These things had such an effect, both on his mind and constitution, that Cædmon assured De Pomeroy, Baldwin had died of a frenzy

fever, brought on by the combined influence of passions so strong and circumstances so mortifying to a proud spirit. Cædmon further informed Sir Henry, that the abbot, in his mortal part, had been laid to rest in the cloisters of his own monastery, near the tomb of Livingus, in the odour of sanctity, and most sincerely regretted by all the monks, over whom he had borne his rule with but too indulgent sway.

Baldwin was indeed a loss, also, to the Saxon school; which, under his auspices, had been revived for the preservation of that most ancient tongue. The poor likewise lamented him, for he had ever been liberal in his alms to the old, the weak, and the infirm; and the high-born and nobles of his neighbourhood regretted very sincerely the loss of an abbot whose learning and accomplished manners made him welcome to the festive halls of every feudal castle. From all these circumstances, it was clear that Abbot Baldwin died more universally deplored and respected than any abbot of his house for many

a long year. Yet were his faults of such a nature, that had the heart of the man been as well known to the world at large, as it was to some of his most trusted friends, his very virtues would have been suspected as capable of being influenced, in some degree, by its spirit for evil.

Whence arose these seeming contradictions ? from a very simple cause. Abbot Baldwin had one besetting sin—his ambition ; before that god of his idolatry, he had scrupled not to sacrifice every principle of truth or justice, when the object he had in view required it at his hands. Fortunately he died, from disappointment, before he had effected much serious mischief, for his schemes had been rather prepared than brought into action ; so that much of his iniquities were known but to those plotters in secret, those wily partisans with whom he had been leagued. Hence was it that his fame suffered less than it deserved ; so often

is the world deceived in its estimate of public men.

As Cædmon related these circumstances to De Pomeroy, an old chaplain of the castle, who was present, and who had known, but never much respected the abbot, sighed as he said,—

“Peace be to his soul ! Abbot Baldwin was a proud, an angry, and a subtle man, yet a friend to the poor scholar, and a reviver of learning. To the world he seemed just, for he was wily, and many of his motives of action lay too deep for human ken ; they were only to be discovered by Him, to whom the thoughts of the heart are always known, by whose sentence not only Abbot Baldwin, but all mankind, will stand or fall at the judgment day. How many will then find the judgment of man reversed ! Some who were held in honour here, will be dishonoured there ; and not a few, who were looked upon as the withered branches of the earth, nevertheless, laid up in the ark of mercy,

shall, like Aaron's rod, when brought from the sanctuary, blossom anew at the presence of their God."

The old chaplain paused in his discourse, and observing the dejected air of De Pomeroy, implored him to attend more regularly than he had done of late the service of the chapel.

CHAPTER XI.

Whereat he smitten was with great affright,
And trembling terror did his heart apall,
Ne wist he what to thinke of that same sight,
Ne what to say, ne what to do at all ;
He doubted least it were some magicall
Illusion that did beguile his sense,
Or wandering ghost that wanted funerall,
Or aery spirite, under false pretence,
Or hellish feend raysed up through devilish science.

SPENSER.

ON the third day after the arrival of the young Saxon thane, he held again with Sir Henry one of those conversations to which we alluded in our last chapter ; still earnestly endeavouring to persuade his friend to pass over into Normandy for a season. Their discourse, succeeded by a melancholy silence, was at length renewed by Cædmon's making some

casual remark on the castle, a part of which had been added to the more ancient buildings by its present possessor, who had, also, bestowed much attention on the decorations of the chamber in which they sat.

In this chamber there were several portraits : Cædmon, who was a great observer of pictures, (having derived his taste for the arts from his old occupation as a scribe and illuminator in the scriptorium of the Abbey,) noticed one which, he thought, bore a striking resemblance to his friend, Sir Henry. He asked whose it was.

“ That is the portrait of Sir Ralph de Pome-roy,” replied Sir Henry, “ the most famed of all our ancient house. He it was who won the banner and the silver spurs from the infidel in the battle of Tours, and received those silver spurs as a token of honour, that should descend to our latest posterity, from the hand of Charles Martel. Do you not observe that he has on his wrist a hawk, the distinction

of noble birth ; and, in the fingers of the same hand, holds a chain, on which hang a pair of silver spurs. If my portrait were to be placed with these of my forefathers, alas ! Cædmon, I should have no title to more than one spur in my picture ; for ours is now but a broken honour, wanting half its credit in the eyes of honest men. De Beaumont won it from us when my unhappy father fell beneath his sword. I dared not adventure its redemption ; since, to attempt the recovery of my father's lost token, by an act that would reflect dishonour on myself, was not to be thought upon. I, therefore, still suffer for his offences, though he who offended and he who was injured, have both passed to their account."

" Holy men teach us," said Cædmon, " that the law of God with the Israelites of old is still His law with Christian men,—that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children."

" They are so, in truth," replied De Pomeroy ;

“I feel it at this hour ; and with me there is no way left to retrieve the ancient glory of our house, but by putting on the red cross. Cædmon, I have thought upon thy counsel. I will depart hence ere long, pass over seas, and try if forgetfulness of the past can be purchased by the memory of that duty which we owe to the holy sepulchre.”

“Such a purpose,” answered Cædmon, “must carry with it the blessing of Heaven. There will be comfort, nay, even luxury, in the indulgence of that grief which has been the cause of so much devotion to the holy cross ; it will be a sorrow that soothes while it complains. But, oh ! do not, do not, noble De Pomeroy, delay to execute your purpose, — wherefore should you ? Say you were this very night to quit your castle, and I were to remain to see all that may be needful done in the ordering of your people ;—would it not be well ? In truth, it would be best for you—for all ; and, as soon as I had ordered all things in

your castle and in my own, I would join your enterprise in the Holy Land. But do not *you* delay. Take with you a chosen band, and depart; I know not wherefore I should desire this with so much earnestness, but I do so. Delay not, then, a day nor an hour your departure."

"Cædmon," said Sir Henry, "your importunity hath in it the warrant of friendship. But I will not fly in so much haste from the castle of my forefathers. I neither fear, nor will seem to fear, the power of man, come it from king or people. I fear not even those powers which tradition and credulity say are busy to work evil when any of our race are on the eve of a great peril, a great sorrow, or a sudden death; else might I, perhaps, have been moved by—" he stopped short.

"By what?" exclaimed Cædmon, "speak."

"By nothing," replied Sir Henry; "I will not speak of such follies. There are many idle tales connected with our house; among

others, that, ever before the death of a Lord de Pomeroy, he who bears the hawk and the silver spurs in yonder picture, is seen to wander through these halls, to give intimation of his approaching fate. But I credit not such idle stories. Nor do I believe it to be more than a fable, that the blast of a horn, blown by unseen lips, and heard in every part of the old building as distinctly as if but sounded at the threshold of each chamber, ever goes before the visitation of the spectre. These are old wives' tales."

Scarcely had Sir Henry uttered these words, when a long and loud blast of a bugle horn echoed through court, tower, and hall, and startled even the speaker, so well, or, rather, so ill-timed, did its thrilling sounds come upon his ear.

There *was* a slight change in Sir Henry's countenance, as Cædmon uttered an exclamation of surprise. "It is the huntsman, who

thus calls up the castle with his horn," said De Pomeroy. "Shall we forth to the woods, and strike down a dappled deer? I hear the tramp of horses,—they are making ready for the chase."

"Those sounds are not the sounds of horses equipped for the chase," said Cædmon; "for, hark! I hear the clash of arms. The bugle sounds again; it is without the castle gates. Who can it be, who thus comes in the array of arms? Sir Henry, shall I go forward to the ward, and order the men to lower the portcullis, that we may talk with these newcomers, ere they cross your gates?"

"Not so," replied Sir Henry; "have I not already said that I will not fear? I will summon Eustace, our body squire, and will send him to bring us tidings."

He did so, and Eustace soon after returned.

"A herald from King Richard," said Eustace; "he comes to greet Sir Henry de Pome-

at his castle of Berry Pomeroy ; he comes with a guard of archers, and wears a tabard ; shall I give him entrance ?”

“ Marshal him hither with all honour,” said Sir Henry. “ But he is here already ; he has followed hard upon your steps.”

The herald entered : he wore a tabard embroidered with lions in gold ; his staff of office was in his hand. He was followed by a guard that wore the royal badges, and proclaimed they belonged to the king.

On seeing the herald, De Pomeroy started, and even recoiled some paces at his approach.

“ Ha !” he exclaimed, “ Sir Geoffrey de Malduit ! what may his presence augur in my good castle ?”

“ Even what thou wilt,” replied Geoffrey, with his accustomed unperturbed effrontery. “ Sir Henry de Pomeroy, I come into thy presence on the service of King Richard. In me you see not Geoffrey de Malduit, but the herald of our liege lord : respect, therefore, my

commission, if you respect not the person of him who bears it. I am bound on a duty which, in the king's name, compels me to visit every castle of the West, wherein those barons have enclosed themselves within their walls, who have hitherto stood aloof from King Richard since his return home. I come to look on the order and number of your men, the state of your castle ; truly there seems no disposition to resist his highness's pleasure, for your gates opened to me, the royal herald, on the first summons. This is well : I ask of you, therefore, Sir Henry, but hospitality for myself and my people ; we are travellers on our way, and shall not long trouble you."

"Geoffrey de Malduit," said Sir Henry, sternly, as he withdrew his hand, on seeing the herald stretch forth his in courtesy, folded his arms across his breast, and looked on him with a proud scorn, "Geoffrey de Malduit, there can be no fellowship between thee and me. As you come wearing the tabard of Eng-

land's king, and in the name of Richard, against whose right and power I take all here present to witness, I make no resistance, you shall have all respect and honour paid to you in this castle. In the king's name you may command here ; and by the authority of that name, I and mine will obey. You have required my hospitality for you and yours as wayfarers. Take it and welcome ; the hospitality of a De Pomeroy was never yet required in vain. It shall be extended towards you with no niggard hand. Thus much have I spoken as due to the king's highness, and to the honour of the lord of this castle. Now, hear me in my own individual person, as Henry de Pomeroy, addressing himself to a sworn knight, hear me—for it is he who now speaks."

Malduit bowed ; and Sir Henry continued,—
"Thy time here accomplished, on the king's mission, thy band and thyself quit from my halls ; thy herald's coat off thy back ; and thou once more denuded of thy ill-merited royal

honours, and no more left of thee than stands acknowledged in the ungarnished person of Geoffrey de Malduit; once more, in such thy natural state, why then will I defy thee, as I do now, to a mortal combat at arms, as base, cowardly, and false-hearted; and in proof of my defiance, I here throw down my glove in gage of battle. Wilt thou underlay my challenge? yea or nay?"

Geoffrey de Malduit turned white with passion; he compressed his lips, drew his breath inwardly, kept silence, paused a minute, and then, with the most perfect calm, as if no strong passion had for a moment shaken his bosom, said, in a careless manner, as he took up the glove,—“Geoffrey de Malduit stoops to take up the gage of thy scorn, Sir Henry; in what way it may be best answered, we will settle ere we part. In the interval, we will suspend all feuds, and do what we can to do credit to the hospitality of Berry Pomeroy, offered with so much courtesy,—with so much

honour to the temper of its valiant and gracious lord."

This was spoken in a manner that neither Sir Henry nor Cædmon could immediately decide, if it were intended in earnest or in mockery; the exercise of a sarcastic humour being the nearest approach to the cheerful that was ever witnessed in Geoffrey de Malduit in a social or domestic circle. That an habitual sneerer should sneer, even when he wanted to appear courteous, was, therefore, no matter of surprise; and, as he took up the glove, and placed it in his girdle in proof that he really accepted the challenge, no one present doubted his sincerity in this particular. For the rest, his conduct, during the three days he remained at Berry Pomeroy, was as we shall now proceed to relate as briefly as possible.

Sir Henry, with that liberality of spirit which characterized most of the old English barons, was studious that no charge should, with reason, be made against his hospitality. He, there-

fore, in the best manner he was able, continued to entertain Sir Geoffrey de Malduit, styling him, on all occasions, the herald of his highness the king. On the first day, he caused the hart hounds to be led forth for his amusement, and a fat buck was stricken, and feasted upon in the castle halls. On the second there was hawking; and on the third and last, a tilting at the quintain in the castle court. On each day the banquet was served, the wine-cup sparkled with the richest wines of France and Gascony, and the harper rang forth the full and varied chords of his harp, as he sang many a minstrel rhyme; nor did Cædmon refuse to touch its strings, as he once more awakened its melody for the gratification of the melancholy De Pomeroy.

Thus passed the time. On the morrow, (the day appointed for his departure,) Sir Geoffrey de Malduit declared it was his intention to go forward to Dartmouth Castle; yet, when the morrow came, he changed his purpose,

and said he would rest one night more at Berry Pomeroy. It was the Eve of St. John.

“The Eve of St. John!” exclaimed De Pomeroy, for he did not, till that moment, recollect the memorable anniversary that had been so fatal to his peace. A deep sigh stole from his bosom, and such a sadness came over his countenance, that Cædmon, who watched him with the eye of the fondest affection, saw that the recollection of what had passed on the last Eve of St. John had completely overcome his spirits; and he rather favoured than opposed some slight excuse De Pomeroy made in the evening, to steal away from his guests, at an early hour after supper. Sir Henry left them in the banqueting hall, just as the minstrels came in with their harps.

De Pomeroy passed into the chamber we have before noticed, where hung the pictures. No lamp was there burning; but the moon, for it was a most beautiful moonlight, fell in

mild and cold radiance through the long, narrow, and shafted windows of the apartment. Tempted by the fineness of the night, De Pomeroy was induced, without asking himself the motive, to indulge his feelings, at such an hour, amid the stillness and the solemnity of nature.

The moon was high in the heavens ; only a few fleecy clouds, edged and touched with her silvery light, floated above the woods, now partially illumined by her beams, whilst the surrounding shadows were softened and melted into harmony. The little river brawled along the woods at the foot of the precipice on the eastern side of the castle : it was now gleaming with the radiance of the moonlight that trembled on the long line of its musical and flowing waters. The towers of Berry Pomeroy stood erect on the summit of the hill, in the solemnity of silence and of night. No sentinel was on the ramparts of this part

of the building ; the moon alone silvered their turreted tops ; they looked cold and white as marble in its beams.

We have said that the terrace overlooked the north-east. It was there that De Pomeroy now stood, contemplating the placid and beautiful scene that lay before him. It was of a kind fitted for the indulgence of that calm and solemn spirit of melancholy, which the sight of the majestic in nature, touched and characterized with a degree of mystery arising from the half seen, half defined forms of moonlight, never fails to present to the imagination. And, as whatever is mysterious more or less connects itself with images of high and holy things, the still hour of the night, the silvery lights and softened shadows of moonlight, are peculiarly adapted to raise in the mind a sense of awe, which, when combined with the power of fancy, brings, as it were, before the sight the spirits of another world.

If the deep repose of the hour, the silence

that reigned around, or the fancy, always potent under such circumstances, might be the occasion of what we have to relate; or if it were merely an idle tale, or something too real for feelings of flesh and blood to witness unappalled, we will not say; but such was the strange event we have to record, that he who witnessed it believed it real, and in that belief, felt, what he had never done before, a sense of fear, mingled with an awful presentiment that it was for no common purpose, for no common errand, that this thing was permitted at such a time and place.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy had retraced his steps to the farthest end of the terrace, and was passing under the shadow of a tower that led to another part of the castle, when he fancied he saw something move in the dusky obscurity that lay before him. He paused, — looked again, — saw it move forward in the direction he was about to take.

He spoke, — he demanded who might be

there? No answer was returned. Suddenly there was a rushing sound, as if something swept close by him. He looked again; — he saw nothing. He once more fixed his eyes on the path he had just passed over, and determined to retrace his steps. He now beheld a tall and shadowy figure that seemed to stand motionless in the direct line of path he was about to pursue, still somewhat obscured by the shade of the castle wall, that extended along the whole length of the terrace that lay at its foot, the terrace itself being alone bounded by the precipice above the rocks, river, and woods that lay at its base.

A thrill of feeling, of interest, not unallied to superstitious dread, determined Sir Henry to follow and overtake the figure that refused to answer to his repeated calls. He advanced; the figure did the same, and glided on before him, but not with a motion that seemed natural to one who walks the earth. Though he followed close, De Pomeroy could not overtake

his extraordinary visitant. At length he pursued him to the very centre of the terrace, where but a moment before there had been the brightest light; but now there was obscurity, for a cloud had crossed the moon's disk and veiled her splendid light. It passed away, leaving her "unclouded in majesty" as before.

The light fell in its clearest, fullest radiance on the terrace. De Pomeroy rushed forward; here he must come upon the intruder, for there were but a few paces between himself and the figure on the one side, and the precipice on the other. The figure in an instant turned to confront him; De Pomeroy saw him face to face, and by the light of the moon, which was but a little paler than that of day, but as "the day-light sick," he saw him, and felt a cold shudder creep through every vein, as he recognised in the red mantle, the hawk on the wrist, and the silver spurs, depending from the chain, held in the right hand, the death-like and fixed countenance, the figure of that De Pomeroy

represented in the picture, to whose visitations in this world so fearful a portent was annexed.

An exclamation, in a tone high and shrill, escaped the lips of the terrified De Pomeroy, as he made a rush to lay his hand upon the figure. It eluded his grasp ; he saw it dart forward, but he saw it no more. He had courage enough, even in such a moment as this, to advance to the very edge, and to look down the precipice. There he saw nothing but the black and yawning gulf that lay before him. Confused, astonished, doubting the evidence of his own senses, shaken and assaulted by fears he had never before known, he rushed back to the castle, scarcely seeming to feel the ground over which he passed.

The first person he encountered in the ante-room was Cædmon ; the flush of anger was on his cheek, his brow was knit, he seemed shaking with passion.

“ What has chanced, Cædmon ? ” inquired De Pomeroy, on meeting.

“ I have quarrelled with Geoffrey de Malduit, that is all,” replied Cædmon ; “ he has insulted me over his cups ; and, more than that——But, merciful Heaven ! what has chanced to you, Sir Henry ? you tremble, and your countenance is as pale as that in the old faded picture of Sir Ralph de Pomeroy ; who, I think, I never before saw you so much resemble, now that you look pale as he. What has happened ? ”

“ What you will not believe, Cædmon,” replied De Pomeroy. “ I have seen him !—nay, start not,—the spectre of Ralph de Pomeroy *has* crossed my path,—it is no fancy. As there is truth in Heaven or on earth,—by the word of a knight, I speak sooth. *Like* him, dost thou say ? may be I shall be more like him still, even as he is now, ere many moons are waned ; for the spectre, if our nurses speak truth, never yet came on a false errand to the castle of De Pomeroy.”

“ If it bodes evil, it has spoken truth already,

and evil enough for this night," said Cædmon ;
" for that Geoffrey de Malduit meditates some
injury to thee, I am certain ; it is on this ground
that we have quarrelled."

" How ! what does he meditate ? and where-
fore didst thou, Cædmon, take up my quarrel
with such a craven ; one whom I have reserved
to chastise with my own sword, in due time
and place, but not under my own roof ?"

" I could not do other," said Cædmon. " No
sooner had you left the hall, unobserved by
Geoffrey, than he inquired where you were
gone ; and said that he had bethought him, he
ought not so to linger on his way. He must
therefore leave the castle suddenly, as this
night. He had considered it would be better
to do so, than in the broad eye of day, on the
morrow. To depart by night would draw less
observation on him and his band. He then
talked apart with them ; and I most distinctly
heard him give orders that *your* horse should
be saddled, and made ready as soon as the

horses of his own people ; and then turning to me, with an air of insolence, he bade me go and seek you out, as if I had been *his* page, or *his* serving varlet. At insolence such as this, I could not keep my temper ; and on my telling him it was the height of presumption in him to order your horse to be made ready for a journey, in your own castle, without your permission, he gave me a reply so insolent that we had high words upon it ; yet I so far governed myself, that I forbore to push our quarrel to any extremity, lest I should lose the opportunity to leave the hall, to warn you of these matters, and bid you beware ; as Geoffrey de Malduit is in a mood both insolent and dangerous, — there *is* malice in his heart ; I saw the spirit of a fiend lurk in his dark and villanous eye. If you can avoid him, do so.”

“ I will not,” said De Pomeroy ; “ I will avoid no man under my own roof. I have done him no wrong ; and I would face him if he were tenfold more a Malduit than he is.

His Norman name speaks the quality of his mind truly enough."

"Be not rash," said Cædmon; "if you can avoid him, let me pray you to do so. I do entreat, if you have ever loved me as your friend, for my sake, if not for your own, to forbear him; for he is this night both malicious and dangerous, or never was there malice or danger in the heart of a wicked man.—I feel assured it is so."

De Pomeroy made no reply, but, followed by Cædmon, passed forward; and it was with a mind greatly excited, wrought to the highest pitch of displeasure, and prepared to feel with more than ordinary passion the insolence of De Malduit, that Sir Henry now encountered him in the great hall, where they had previously supped.

As they met, their looks spoke defiance; those of Malduit wore an expression that was almost demoniacal. He had deliberately contemplated and worked himself up to the execu-

tion of a deed of the most cold-blooded treachery of which the still-existing records of his age bear testimony ; for, after having been, as we have shown, for three days entertained in the most hospitable manner by his destined victim, (who was wholly unsuspecting of such treachery,) at his castle of Berry Pomeroy, Malduit reserved for the last night of his sojourn there, the execution of the very purpose which had brought him to its gates.

Immediately, therefore, on seeing De Pomeroy, he drew from his vest a parchment, unrolled it, and showed it was a warrant from Richard in council, to arrest Sir Henry de Pomeroy, as a traitor, for having been in league with the partisans of the Earl of Mortaigne in the late insurrections, in various parts of the kingdom, and more especially in the West.

To describe the indignation which now filled the bosom of De Pomeroy would be impossible. Cædmon, also, felt so indignant that he drew his sword, as he endeavoured to rush from

the hall with the intent to rouse the people of Sir Henry, in the hope to deliver him from the power of his enemies, though the vassals of De Pomeroy were far less in number than those of De Malduit. Cædmon, however, was disarmed, and detained, but with the assurance that no harm should be done to him, for it was well known to all present, that the young Saxon thane was in favour with the king. In vain did Cædmon endeavour by entreaty, by remonstrance with those who held him apart, to free himself from their grasp, that he might fly to the support of his betrayed and unhappy friend.

Malduit now offered to lay hands on De Pomeroy; he became almost frantic with passion, at this renewed insult.

“Off, off!” he exclaimed; “lay no hands on me: I will not endure thy pernicious touch; for thou, Geoffrey de Malduit, evil in thy race, and in thy nature,—thou art too vile to approach one who bears the character or feelings

of a man. Thou art callous to all reproach ; for thou hast no conscience that could be roused to blush for thine own villany. For three days hast thou been under my roof ; honourably entertained as a herald of the king, and yet as such, ere thou would'st now quit my castle walls, for the first time, dost thou let me know the purpose that brought thee to them ; and that my hospitality is to be requited by arresting me as a traitor ; and that, too, when I did not for an instant bar my gates against the king's power in thy person. But thou hast neither honour nor humanity in thy soul, else thou would'st have delayed even this last act of thy baseness till the morrow ; thou would'st not have executed it on the Eve of St. John ; a time that all who know Henry de Pomeroy, know well enough is to him of fearful recurrence ; a day that can never be blotted from his memory."

Malduit seemed to exult ; it seemed as if in the extremity of his malice, he derived a

new pleasure from finding he had consummated the misery of the unhappy De Pomeroy, on the anniversary of a day so marked by calamity, by suffering to his feelings. The wretch laughed in the brutality of his triumph, as he said, alluding to the circumstance of Adela being the sister of Sir Henry, when he knew not that she was such.—“Yes, the last Eve of St. John was marked by a godly pilgrimage of thine; to seize the Mount like a traitor to thy sovereign prince, and to steal thine own sister from her cell, when she had taken up her abode at St. Michael’s, to hide her dishonour and thine from all the world.

At the hearing of this most false, most unjust and cruel taunt thrown on the memory of his blameless sister, Sir Henry de Pomeroy, without a pause to draw breath enough to give utterance to his indignation, fell a few paces back, drew his dagger, rushed on De Malduit, and buried the weapon up to the very haft, in the treacherous heart of this tyrant in in-

solence and office. The sturdy wretch rolled at his feet, uttered a faint groan, and expired.

To paint the scene that followed would be impossible. The followers of De Malduit gathered round the body; raised it, whilst they vainly essayed to find some sign of lingering life. All were so much engaged that at the instant and for some time after, not one of them observed that Sir Henry de Pomeroy had fled from the hall, and that Cædmon had followed him.

Cædmon had, indeed, followed with the most anxious purpose, to prevent, if possible, all further mischief, amidst such turbulent and unruly men and passions. In vain, however, did he now interfere; in vain did he endeavour to learn from Sir Henry what might be his purpose. He hoped that De Pomeroy had fled from the hall to call up his vassals to stand by him at this extremity, in defence of their lord in his own castle.

But it was all in vain ; there was an air of wildness, amounting to frenzy, (no doubt it was the effect of a temporary madness, brought on by the impassioned and excited state of his feelings,) in the demeanour, the looks, the words of De Pomeroy. He gazed on Cædmon as he spoke, as if he neither heard nor comprehended what he said. He walked in rapid strides to the court-yard of the castle. There he saw his own horse, standing equipped, ready for his master, as Geoffrey de Malduit had directed, when he had resolved on that evening to put in force the warrant of arrest, and to remove De Pomeroy from his own castle under cover of night, and as a prisoner in his especial charge.

On seeing the horse, Sir Henry's consciousness appeared to return,—his disturbed demeanour became more calm ; still there was an air of wildness in his looks and manner, as he pointed to the horse, and said,

“Cædmon, Cædmon, do you remember that animal?”

Cædmon, who guessed the thought which had suggested these words, would not say he did; he remained, therefore, silent.

“I rode that creature,” said De Pomeroy, “on the last fatal Eve of St. John. I placed on its back my unhappy sister, lost—lost, and by my means! Is it not, Cædmon,” he said, (as a bitter laugh burst from his lips, the laugh of “moody madness,”)—“is it not the very animal that I should mount this night?” and, so saying, he leapt on the gallant charger’s back.

“What do you mean, Sir Henry?” said Cædmon, affrighted by the wild eagerness of his looks: “where will you go?”

“Where go?” cried Sir Henry, and another laugh that curdled the blood, and was even yet more appalling than the former, shocked Cædmon as it met his ear, for in it

he recognised the laugh of absolute frenzy. “Where man shall have no power to wreak his will on De Pomeroy. Thinkest thou, Cædmon, that when yonder carrion is cast forth to the dogs, that I shall be pardoned having made the base wretch fit to banquet them and the worms? No; I am already called traitor,—murderer will be now my title of addition, and I shall die as a murderer dies, by the hand of the public executioner. But this shall never be: spirit of my forefathers, I thank thee,—thou hast marshalled me the way. On, my good horse, on! Farewell, Cædmon, thou only true friend, farewell! On, my brave steed, on!—knowest thou not that this is the Eve of St. John? the eve on which she perished—Adela—my sister—thy death is requited now!”

So saying he looked up to heaven, as if gazing on something in the upper air; then gave the rein to his horse, and struck with

his heels his sides ; the noble animal, used to obey the least motion of his rider, dashed forward, but not in the direction towards the gates of the castle. Cædmon saw him turn the creature's head towards the terrace. The young Saxon followed with the foot of a fawn more than of a man for swiftness. But it was too late : De Pomeroy had gained the terrace. The instinct of the horse had resisted all his rider's efforts to make him leap the precipice ; till, tearing off the short cloak he wore, Sir Henry threw it over the animal's eyes, and in another second both horse and rider had passed the fearful gulf, and lay dead at its base.

Years, even centuries, have rolled away since this occurrence took place at Berry Pomeroy Castle ; but not even at this distance of time could the writer of these pages visit the spot, without feeling a shudder as she stood on the fatal terrace, and looked down the precipice

which tradition still points out as having been that of the fearful death of the gallant, though erring Sir Henry de Pomeroy, so soon after the return of the lion-hearted Richard to this realm of England.

THE END.

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"The tales in which the Trials of the Heart are described are delightfully written ; as works of fiction, they abound in all the poetry of imagination, tempered with judgment, and reduced to the purposes of actual existence ; as narratives of facts, they are sublimated, by the genius of the writer, from the dulness of detail and the tediousness of repetition. There is, throughout all these tales, a moral feeling, always perceptible, but never obtrusive ; morality is taught by example, and not thrust upon the reader by the dictation of ostentatious precept. These volumes contain a variety of tales, all differing in incident and in the delineation of character, yet all equally replete with truth, and all written with a delicacy of feeling and an accuracy of taste, the happy unity of which causes no other regret, than that the series is not longer, and the pleasure of the reader protracted to greater length."

The Times.

"We have, in former notices of Mrs. Bray's numerous works, observed that one of her good points, in common with Swift, De Foe, Cervantes, &c., is what the French term *vraisemblance*,—the power of placing ideal circumstances in so natural a light that

they appear to be truths. What is the secret? The incidents are devised, but the colouring by which they are made apparent is from nature. This Mrs. Bray herself avows in the introduction to the volumes before us. * * * These volumes will at once support and enhance a literary reputation so honourably and industriously achieved. * * * Her labours are interspersed with too many interesting facts and notices, (and the depth of the occasional reflections shows that Mrs. Bray is no commonplace reader of the human heart,) and too much sound instruction, to be of an evanescent nature."—*Gentleman's Magazine*.

"There is nothing wanting to render each narrative perfect in its kind. They are highly suggestive, natural, and pathetic, and their domestic interest is heightened throughout by a wide spirit of Christian philanthropy."—*Monthly Chronicle*.

"Most of Mrs Bray's works have been translated into German, and even Dutch, and are as well known as in England. In Germany, indeed, she has been designated 'the female Walter Scott.'" *Naval and Military Gazette*.

"In conclusion, we must express our high admiration of the genius of Mrs. Bray. We think that she deserves to be ranked as one of the greatest female writers of England."

Monthly Magazine.

"This is a collection of short and striking tales ; written in Mrs. Bray's best manner, and with her usual good purpose. They are very various as to time, place, incident, and character ; in each there is much to recommend, and they are all amusing. In them the Author has drawn upon her experience, as a traveller, and describes a striking part of France. Few English have explored it since, and none, certainly, have come up to her descriptions of it."

Metropolitan Magazine.

"Mrs. Bray's writings are richly diversified, her feelings intense, her appreciation of the workings of the human bosom subtle and searching : she can at will probe the human heart, and lay it open in its most passionate moments."—*Monthly Review*.

"These tales are admirable in their moral tendency, and as they are written with genius, are effective in moral influence. They captivate the attention of the reader in no ordinary degree. *The Adopted* is a Breton tale of the French Revolution : the finale is admirably worked up, full of pathos and power.

Court and Ladies' Magazine.

"These 'Trials of the Heart,' of Mrs. Bray, are sermons in disguise; not only do they instruct the human heart, but they evince a deep knowledge of it: for simplicity, truth, and vigour of diction they rise to the rank of the best models; whether they will be fully appreciated by the present age we know not, but we may safely predict they will take their rank in future by the side of Cervantes, De Foe, and Sterne; in short, by the best writers of fiction, if fiction that may be termed which is but a true picture of human nature."

Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette.

TRELAWNY OF TRELAWNE.

"When we said, in a former review, that we scarcely knew any one so well qualified to fill up the vacuum left by the death of Sir Walter Scott, in the line of historical romance, as Mrs. Bray, we uttered no hasty or vain prediction. In every fresh production she has risen beyond her former, and we mistake if 'Trelawny' do not prove the most popular of all. * * * Under the fiction of a collection of family letters, Mrs. Bray has concocted a tale, not inferior in *vraisemblance* to the productions of Swift, Cervantes, or De Foe. * * * To sum up our opinion in a few words, 'Trelawny of Trelawne' will, at once, be acceded a place among that class of our national and standard romances which are constructed so as to interweave delightful fiction with grave historical fact, to charm the understanding and amend the heart."—*Gentleman's Magazine*.

"The best of all Mrs. Bray's works."—*Spectator*.

"Mrs. Bray's tact and talent, her vast fund of antiquarian and local knowledge, and the happy facility with which she brings it into play in illustrating the brilliant creations of her fancy, are matters too familiar to the reading public, to need any lengthened commendation at our hands."—*St. James's Chronicle*.

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MOUNTAINS AND LAKES OF SWITZERLAND.

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Naval and Military Gazette.

"The present volumes have much to recommend them which we do not recollect to have offered to us in preceding publications of a similar character. In addition to picture upon picture of mountain and lake, hill and valley, town and village, castle and chalet, with a profusion that never cloy, and a variety that never ceases to please, these volumes treat almost as much of persons as of things; the Swiss themselves, and many passages of their extraordinary history, occupying their due share of the writer's attention and observation * * * It is a perfect picture of what it professes to paint. We cordially recommend the work as most entertaining and instructive."—*Morning Post*.

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United Service Gazette.

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"Mr. and Mrs. Bray will be found excellent, intelligent, and even mirthful *compagnons de voyage*."—*Atlas*.

"The Author of these letters from the Mountains ('Mountains and Lakes of Switzerland,') went among them with a mind well stored with all the information that her task demanded. Therefore, is it that history, tradition, and topographical accuracy add to the value of the more imaginative and poetic portions. The biography of William Tell may be instanced in support of the former, and the descriptions of scenery throughout the volumes are an ample evidence of the latter. Moreover, a truly unaffected piety, and a blandness of sentiment, is manifested which cannot fail to be eminently useful among the many who will be readers of so standard a work."—*Court Journal*.

"Mr. and Mrs. Bray have contrived to make their labours almost as interesting to the desultory reader as though they were the first discoverers of the marvels and peculiarities of the countries through which they travelled. They allow nothing to escape them,—the picturesque, the humorous, and the strange have full justice done them, either in the communications of the lady, or the comments of the gentleman; and both appear well qualified to execute satisfactorily their several duties."

New Monthly Magazine.

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"The genius of Mrs. Bray has been justly appreciated by an admiring public. Her historical romances are not less distinguished by the pomp and circumstance of chivalry, by accurate delineations of every variety of ancient manners, than by an interesting narrative, and a flowing, vigorous, and graceful style.

Literary Chronicle.

"The 'White Hoods' will rank high in its class: there are some spirited sketches of character, a most interesting story, and the most faithful pictures of the times."—*Literary Gazette.*

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"Nothing can be better adapted for the purposes of romance, than the character of Gaston Phœbus Count de Foix. All the minor details, the descriptions of the habitations and manners of the people to whom the romance relates, are given with a fidelity and minuteness which can scarcely be too highly praised. Among all the works which have recently appeared, we know of none more amusing and satisfactory than this romance of Mrs. Bray."

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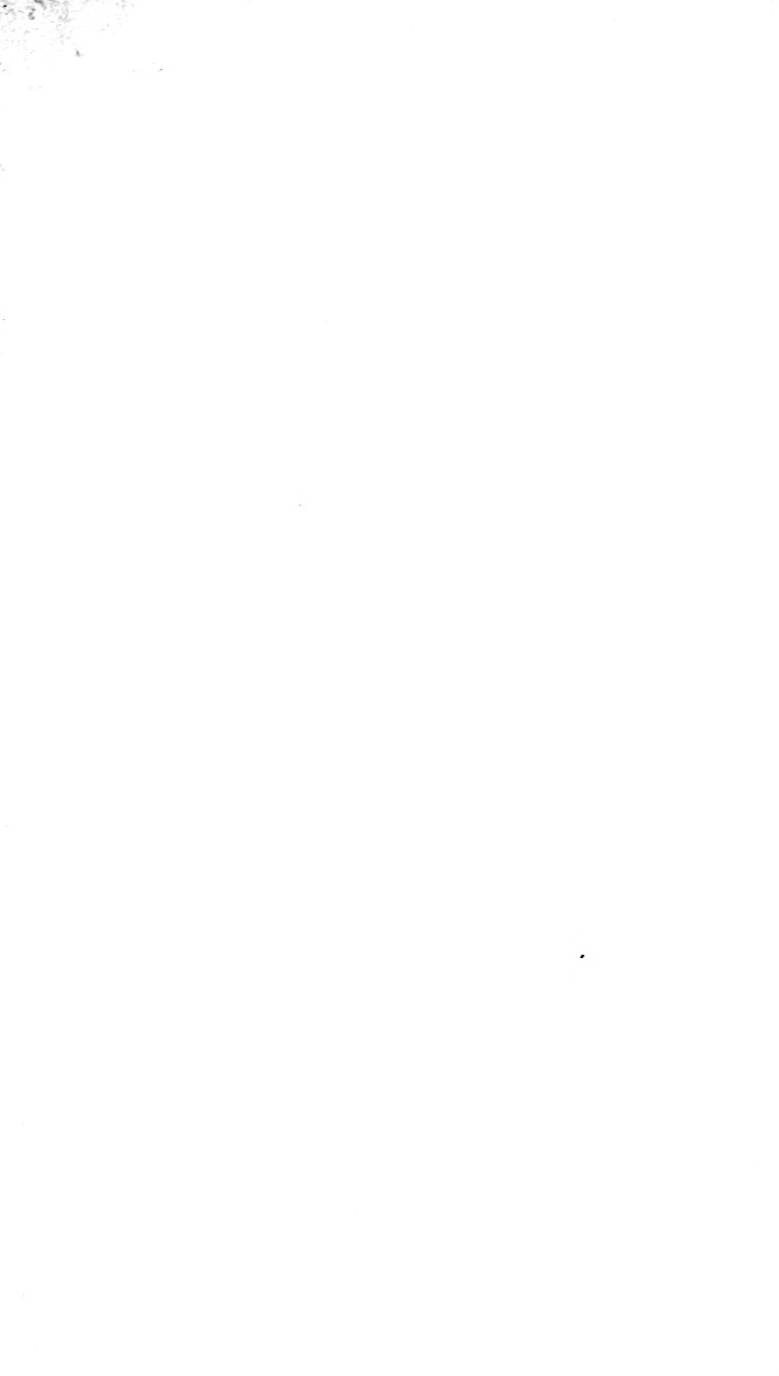
WALREDDON;

OR,

THE LOST HEIR.

A LEGEND OF DEVON.







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